DECEMBER 30, 1981 • $1.50

The Polish Coup and the Soviet Empire

Xan Smiley, Nick Eberstadt & Tom Ricks, and The Editors

THE NEW REPUBLIC

FOR REFERENCE
DO NOT TAKE FROM THE ROOM

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**A Merry Corporate Christmas,
And to the Rest of Us, Good Night.**

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CORRESPONDENCE

THE BEATLES REMEMBERED

To the editors:

I wasn't old enough to understand the Beatles when they were still together, but thanks to John Lahr's touching article ("The Beatles Considered," TNR, December 2), I feel that somehow I can understand what everyone felt when they heard these four geniuses play. I must have read every article and watched every television show about them since John Lennon was murdered, but your article is definitely the best; you might even say it was the icing on the cake. Please, keep up the good work, and thank you again for a truly marvelous exposition on an era that some of us can only read about.

Dori Cosgrove
Atlanta, Georgia

VENEZUELAN POLITICS

To the editors:

The tragedy of Central America presents a continuing challenge to U.S. journalists and academics. Morton Kondracke's "The Venezuelan Heresy" (TNR, November 11) is an admirable effort to present a concerned Christian Democratic perspective. The article is in need of some clarification and updating, however. While Kondracke properly points out in his "disclosure statement" that he is expressing the view of the Venezuelan Christian Democratic (COPEI-Social Christian Party) Administration of President Luis Hererra Campíns, he tends to imply that he is expressing the view of "the Venezuelans."

The presence of the late Romulo Betancourt at the September 1981 U.N. speech of President Hererra Campíns does not signify that the party, Acción Democratica, which he founded back in the 1936-41 period, supports the COPEI policy in Central America. The reality is quite the contrary. Accion Democratica and its vibrant leader, former President Carlos Andrés Pérez, are strong supporters of the new Socialist International assertiveness in the third world in general and of the Franco-Mexican diplomatic initiative in particular. A.D. and the Socialist International have reconfirmed their support of a negotiated settlement between their campañero, Guillermo Ungo, of the Democratic Revolutionary Front, and José Napoleón Duarte, the campañero, of Venezuela's Christian Democrats.

Both Venezuelan and Mexican foreign policies reflect the pragmatic interests of the government of the day. It is silly to suggest that either one is more "principled" or "forthright" than the other.

Venezuela's Christian Democrats have an additional reason not to cross the Reagan Administration. President Hererra Campíns is attempting to maneuver his country through a difficult and somewhat dangerous period of letdown and economic recession following the petrodollar binge of the mid-1970s. Inflation, crime, and unemployment are on the rise, as is popular political disillusionment. Public opinion polling in Venezuela is also picking up the fact that an increasing number of people are expressing support for a return of military rule. The middle class, which voted the Christian Democrats into office in late 1978, is also displaying a dramatic lack of confidence in Hererra's recovery program by putting its money into Miami rather than its own country.

David Eugene Blank
University of Louisville
Louisville, Kentucky

CASHING IN ON IRAS

To the editor:

Your suggestion that the Democrats could "give citizens of all economic classes an incentive to save" by removing limits on Individual Retirement Accounts is wrong—if equity is a goal ("The Stockman Papers," TNR, December 2). IRAs only benefit those rich enough to make the investment. According to a Department of Treasury study, only five percent of those making $20,000 or below who are now eligible to contribute to an IRA do so. The same study shows that 52 percent of those making above $50,000 contribute to IRAs. Expanding IRAs to those in approved pension plans, as Congress voted this summer, will not cause any different trends in use. In fact, many observers expect double-dipping to result as high-income people continue to contribute to their employer-sponsored plan while using the IRA as a tax shelter.

More importantly, whether they are covered by a pension plan or not, low- and moderate-income people simply do not have the money to sock away in an IRA, and if they do, it is usually necessary for them to keep their assets more liquid in case of emergencies (there are severe penalties for withdrawing from an IRA early). Moreover, the tax incentive for those in the 50 percent bracket is 2½ times the incentive for a person in the 20 percent bracket.

Jane Stone
Congress Watch
Washington, D.C.

STOCKMAN AND LBJ

To the editors:

"The Stockman Papers" (TNR, December 2) editorial endeavors to equate David Stockman's statements to William Greider with the actions of President Johnson in the Tonkin Gulf incident. In both content and magnitude the association does not fit. President Johnson used the alleged firing on American intelligence ships to provoke a confrontation with a small, weak nation that ultimately went on to give the United States its first military defeat in history. Hundreds of thousands of lives were lost, a once lush country was left in ruins, billions of dollars of deficit financed dollars were spent, the entire world condemned our action and even loyal friends of long standing refused to participate in the war. Congress ultimately repealed the action originated by Johnson.

David Stockman acknowledged that he had private doubts about an action he was publicly supporting, and he stated his regret regardless of the obvious controversy he provoked. The subject was confined to the American government, it had no international significance, it brought about no warfare. The presidency was not involved.

Kirk A. Wickersham
Edina, Minnesota

The editors welcome correspondence from TNR's readers. Letters intended for publication should include the correspondent's full name, address, and telephone number; should be typed double-spaced; and should be held to under 200 words.

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

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TRB

FROM WASHINGTON

Christmas, 1941

"All in!" shouts Pat McKenna from the door of the Oval Office. It is two days before Christmas, precisely 40 years ago. We have never before been so scrutinized in a press conference. We enter single file, holding credentials aloft and announcing our newspapers. There are Secret Service men, Scotland Yard men, ordinary sleuths, and press gallery assistants. Some reporters are so tense by the time they get in that they can't speak. Latecomers find a wall round the President's desk with two Secret Service men gazing back at them or off into space with an air of abstraction.

"Is he here? Where is he?" they keep saying. Those in the front line see two of the strongest faces in history. On the left is Franklin Roosevelt, mobile featured, chin up-tilted, and familiar smile known by every cartoonist. Beside him sits Winston Churchill.

Yes, he is here after Pearl Harbor. How did he come? By boat, of course, the new warship, "Duke of York," with a party of 80. He is staying in the best bedroom. He sits impassive, staring into space with the unselfconsciousness developed through thousands of political gatherings. His face is a blend of cherub and bulldog; the dominating quality depends on whether he is smiling or setting his jaw.

"All in!" repeats McKenna.

FDR makes a muted introduction. Maybe he is awed a little too. Suddenly America is at war. When Japan struck Pearl Harbor, Hitler addressed a great gathering in Berlin's Opera House. He denounced Roosevelt, shouting that he had failed in the economy, and now, manipulated by Jews all around him, had turned to war. France and Europe had fallen; Russia would collapse soon.

Forty years ago, in one of the great scenes in the White House, we watched FDR running a press conference, which was the only equivalent in America to the question period in the British House of Commons. Some reporters began to clap. Here was Churchill, who saw London attacked, who often had to quit 10 Downing Street for a headquarters 35 feet below ground, a man whose rolling periods lifted men's souls. He had declared, "We shall defend our island, we shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight in the fields and streets, we shall never surrender. . . ."

People complained that they couldn't see. Churchill stood up; the noise grew and became a cheer. He suddenly climbed gleefully onto his chair and a roar went up, with Roosevelt joining. The stocky leader, a head shorter than Roosevelt, who had hitherto sat quietly, suddenly dominated the room.

How long before Hitler is beaten? Half as long if we manage it right than if we do it badly! Roosevelt throws back his head in appreciation. Questions rattle down. Less ebullient than Roosevelt, Churchill speaks solemnly about the news that the Russian line is holding—even pushing the invaders back. There is something of the manner of Carter Glass in the snarl with which he refers to Mussolini as a "lackey" of the Nazis. He gives it an unforgettable curl of the lip that recalls the testy little Virginia Senator, who speaks out of the corner of his mouth. ("Think what Glass would say," said Woodrow Wilson, "if he used his whole mouth.")

We compare the two leaders. Will English-speaking nations always have men like this to lead them at times of mortal danger? The pink-faced Prime Minister stands smiling or snarling, his head characteristically advanced and set forward on a short neck. He wears a natty tie; his hands are tucked under his coat lapels.

And then Franklin Roosevelt, Hyde Park squire, half-paralyzed from a disaster that has given him steel braces and put iron in his character. He and Eleanor have taken Harry Hopkins into

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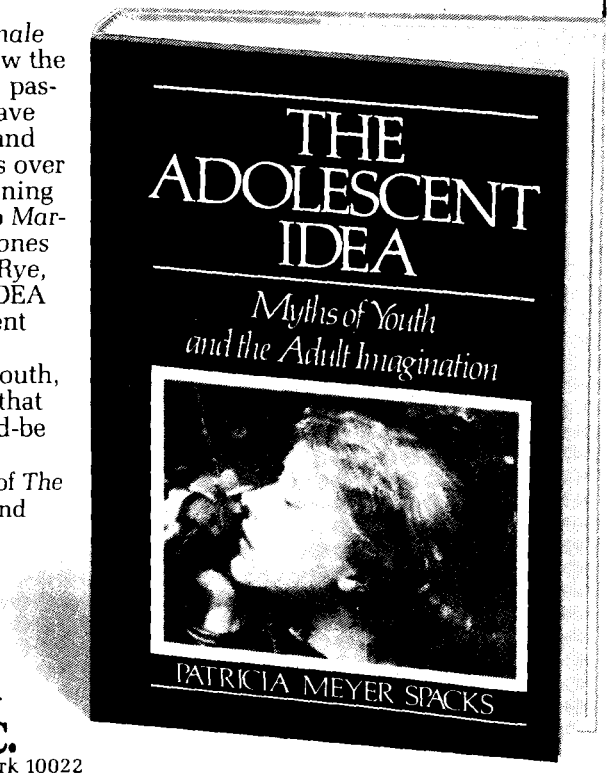
Of this season's books on youth, "the best." —*The New Republic*

The author of *The Female Imagination* shows how the energies, promise, and passions of adolescents have concerned, charmed, and challenged their elders over three centuries. Examining novels from *Pamela* to *Martha Quest*, from *Tom Jones* to *The Catcher in the Rye*, THE ADOLESCENT IDEA "illuminates our present and future, because it shows us our cult of youth, life, growth, and how that undermines our would-be faith in fixed values."
—Martin Green, author of *The von Richthofen Sisters* and *Children of the Sun*



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THE NEW REPUBLIC
DECEMBER 30, 1981

THE POLISH COUP

In 1976 Gerald Ford asserted that the Soviet Union does not dominate Poland. He paid for that blunder with the presidency. Mr. Ford must be wondering today what the fuss was all about. To hear European and American governments describe the army takeover in Poland as an "internal affair," one would think they were talking about the rotation of generals in a Latin American junta, not the reassertion of repressive power in a Soviet satellite. French Foreign Minister Claude Cheysson said that the Polish situation was a strictly internal matter, and added that France intended to do "absolutely nothing" about it. Britain and West Germany contented themselves with declarations of strict nonintervention and the hope that other Helsinki signatories would agree. The Reagan Administration's first reaction was to warn against "outside interference"—as if the history of Poland since 1945 had been anything other than a history of outside (that is, Soviet) interference, domination, occupation, exploitation, and oppression.

It was left to unemployed national security advisers to state the obvious. It didn't take a Henry Kissinger to realize that the Polish crackdown would never have happened "without Soviet pressure, without 30 Soviet divisions on their borders, without the constant threat of Soviet intervention, and without the Communist Party ideology, which is universal, that you cannot have independent organizations in a Communist state." But it did take Henry Kissinger to say it. And it took Zbigniew Brzezinski to call the army takeover for what it was: "a Soviet invasion by proxy." But the distinction between internal measures and external intervention has been the recurrent theme of both American and European official reaction. This fiction serves an important diplomatic purpose. As long as Western governments can pretend the Soviets have no hand in Polish actions, they can consider themselves free of any responsibility to act.

In fact, a "Polish solution" would be the best the Soviets could hope for, and it is precisely what they have been demanding ever since Solidarity came into existence last year. An independent trade union within the Communist empire is a contradiction in terms and a threat to its power. But a Warsaw Pact invasion to suppress Solidarity would risk not only armed resistance from the Poles but also possible disruption of badly needed credits from and trade with the West. With an internal solution, the Soviets can have their imperial cake and detente, too.

It is one thing to lose one's political bearings by pretending that the Soviets have nothing to do with what is happening in Poland. It is quite another to fail to condemn unequivocally the Polish coup and its clear attempt to throttle the liberty that Solidarity had begun to win. That is to lose one's moral bearings, as the *Washington Post* did in an editorial headlined "General Jaruzelski's Burden," a sympathetic view of a Polish Hamlet. "It is an ugly thing to watch a Communist

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general . . . crack down on a brave popular workers' movement," the *Post* conceded. "But as long as he appears also to be serving a second purpose—saving from Soviet vengeance as much as possible of the fruits of the Polish people's struggle and sacrifice over the last 16 months—he deserves the cautious regard he has been getting from the Reagan Administration and other governments." If "cautious regard" is due the perpetrators of the Polish coup, it should come from the East, not the West. General Jaruzelski is not the first respected national military hero to take power in the name of preserving the existence of the state and averting the vengeance of an imperial neighbor. Marshal Pétain showed the way 40 years ago, and by doing Germany's dirty work he made France's life—and her virtue—easier than it would have been otherwise.

Others point out that Jaruzelski was sorely provoked by Solidarity's rash demands for a national referendum. Senator Percy, chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, said he understood that this demand was "intolerable," and noted that even in the U.S. we "do not run our government by referendum." But then, we do not *need* national referenda in the U.S. because we are free to replace our government in periodic, and free, elections. In fact, Solidarity called for a referendum only in the event that the government refused its offer of a genuine coalition. Mr. Percy confuses the provoked with the provocateurs. Solidarity has been in continual struggle since its birth because the government reneged on most of the promises it made in the Gdansk agreements of 1980 (like free access to the press) and because, for the past year, the Party has sought to blame Solidarity for the accumulated failures of 30 years of Communist rule.

Those who view Jaruzelski as having been pushed to impose martial law not by the Soviets but by Walesa and the "radicals" in Solidarity also tend to take a certain view of Jaruzelski's intentions. They believe that he intends to be true to the words of his nationwide address: that he has no thought of rolling back the clock to pre-August 1980, that he is seeking merely a cooling-off period to establish order, that he must settle the country down so he can continue its "socialist renewal."

We hope this view is correct. But we have our doubts. What else could Jaruzelski have done in his address to the nation but appeal to patriotism? An appeal to Party loyalty or to building socialism would have been met with derision—or open revolt. That is why he took control by means of the army—one of the three national institutions that enjoys the respect of the people (along with Solidarity and the Church), and the only one of the three that can be relied upon to support the central power of the state. Jaruzelski may not have a media adviser, but he does know how to use symbols in appealing to his people. He made sure to scapegoat a few already disgraced Party leaders. Jailing the hapless Edward Gierek—an otherwise empty gesture—to balance the abduction of Lech Walesa denotes a certain devotion to symmetry and symbolism. Jaruzelski even had state television news-readers donning military uniforms on camera (same newsreader in new garb—like having Dan Rather suddenly appear in brass buttons) and ordered the military to take over direct operations of factories that make uniforms.

Jaruzelski did promise a return to "socialist renewal" after the temporary aberration of army rule. But the history of Communist coups in Eastern Europe and elsewhere—and Jaruzelski has, in effect, retaken power for Communism—does not bode well for promise-keeping by their leaders. Marxist-Leninists tend to respond more to the "correlation of forces" than to past promises. And it is the existing correlation of forces in Poland that has been shattered by martial law.

So many unexpected, indeed impossible, things have happened in Poland during the past 16 months that it would be a mistake to shut out hope entirely. A people can be crushed but a people cannot be crushed easily. Whatever else may happen, it would be a mistake to expect the simple restoration of the kind of Party dictatorship that existed before August 1980.

It would also be a mistake to be confident about the capacity of Solidarity to withstand the blow delivered last week to the delicate balance of power in Poland. Before martial law, the contending forces in the Polish political drama were acting under a kind of strategic umbrella: each side had an ultimate weapon so powerful it was unthinkable to use it. The government had the army and Solidarity the general strike. Because it was thought that neither side would or could successfully exercise its ultimate power, a kind of deterrence prevailed, forcing the parties to negotiate and seek accommodation. Now the government has done the unthinkable, perhaps the impossible, of trying to sup-

□ FIFTY YEARS AGO: "At a time when their party prospects are more promising than they have been for 20 years, you would expect every Democrat to beam. I regret to report that not many of them do. They have no end of confidence, but the change in their position from a minority party of opposition to one which controls the House carries with it certain worries, cares and burdens. This condition is aggravated by the fact that they have no program and apparently are unable to form one which a united party in House and Senate can support. . . . There is another cause for Democratic concern—many Democrats do not want to nominate for President the man they seem most likely to nominate, to wit, Franklin D. Roosevelt." (TRB, THE NEW REPUBLIC, December 30, 1931.)

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press a popular revolution with the army. But if the workers are not able to mobilize and resist with an effective strike, the balance of forces in Poland could change radically and perhaps irrevocably. It was never legality or love of democracy that made the Polish authorities agree to Solidarity's existence in the first place, but rather an irresistible popular force. If that force proves not irresistible but containable by repression, the workers' movement may be weakened, perhaps fatally.

Assume that this happens, that Solidarity does not resist, that the Polish people, however slowly, acquiesce to army rule. At that point, even if we grant Jaruzelski the most benign of intentions, what possible incentive could he have not to complete what he had begun? Why permit Solidarity to reestablish itself and take Poland to "the abyss" yet again some day in the future? There seems little logic to the crackdown if it is meant as a temporary measure. Its object seems to be to break Solidarity, if possible. We hope the Polish people will not permit that to happen.

Besides hope, what can the West do? First, we must be prepared to condemn, not just deplore, what has happened: the imposition of martial law, the arrest of Solidarity's leaders, the suspension of the most elementary civil liberties, and the attempt to break the union. If the United States does not call unequivocally for an end to these actions, who will? And if we do not, the Poles will be further demoralized when they learn that we are too timid even to express support for their freedom.

Furthermore, though it is clear that we have no military leverage in Eastern Europe, we do have considerable economic leverage. We have sent the Poles almost a billion dollars of food aid. Secretary Haig has declared suspension of further aid, although not what is now "in the pipeline." It is hard to fathom the reason for this purely formal distinction between pipeline and nonpipeline aid. If we want to exert whatever leverage we have over the Polish state, the time to do it is now—not when pipeline shipments run out. And rather than cutting off food completely, it would be more effective to declare that we will give it directly to Solidarity for distribution to the Polish people, or, when that offer is refused, to the Church.

We can also make it clear that we don't believe in the fiction of Soviet nonintervention. We can say quietly to the Soviets and the Polish authorities that if Poland does not resume what Mr. Haig calls its "political experiment," we will refuse to continue to extend credit to Poland and the rest of the Soviet bloc. We can start with the $1.1 billion in Polish loans that the U.S. has already rescheduled. We should make it clear that we will tolerate no more rescheduling and that we will urge allied governments and Western banks to do the same. (They will probably refuse to follow our lead. In fact, the *New York Times* reports that "European bankers . . . express[ed] relief at the crackdown in the hope that the Poles will now be pressed to improve their work habits, produce more, and pay off their debts to the West, which now amount to nearly $27 billion.") Nevertheless, U.S. willingness to write off bad Eastern European debts and deny further credit to the crumbling economies of the Soviet bloc will send an unmistakable message to Moscow that we do not accept the new status quo in Poland and that we hold Poland's fraternal "socialist" allies responsible.

But boycotting arms control negotiations in Geneva would be a mistake. Not because there is something sacred about continuing negotiations in the face of provocation, but because the control of nuclear arms is a vital interest of our own, and, more important, because a boycott would only give the now quiescent and sobered European neutralists cause once again to shift attention away from Communist repression toward "American intransigence" instead.

No one believes that such steps can be decisive. But they may help sway decisions made at the margin. Constant talk of empty threats if the Soviets intervene is worse than useless. If they are taken seriously, Soviet and Polish authorities will simply be given all the more reason to ensure that the current "Polish solution" succeeds—it would make a Soviet invasion superfluous. There are certain concrete steps that the U.S. can take now. There is a question, first of all, of our own self-respect. There is also a question of doing what little we can to help the first genuine mass workers' movement in the Communist world. It is time for the U.S. government to stop talking about the need for stability. Americans may have given up John Kennedy's promise to "bear any burden" for liberty, but we should at least have the decency to give moral and material support to those in Poland who are willing to take up that burden.

Golan Gained Is Israel's Loss

In virtually annexing the Golan Heights to Israel, Menachem Begin has not in any way materially enhanced the security of his country. The move, moreover, certainly has not strengthened Israel's legal claim to this barren buffer which, since 1967, has kept Syria from its previously routine practice of lobbing mortar and death onto the kibbutzim and other civilian agricultural settlements of the northern Galilee.

For all of Mr. Begin's prattling about his new strategic allies here in Washington, he did not even give them the courtesy of advance warning, let alone a consultation. We have some small consolation on this score: he treated Israel's own political system with even greater contempt. The entire enterprise took less

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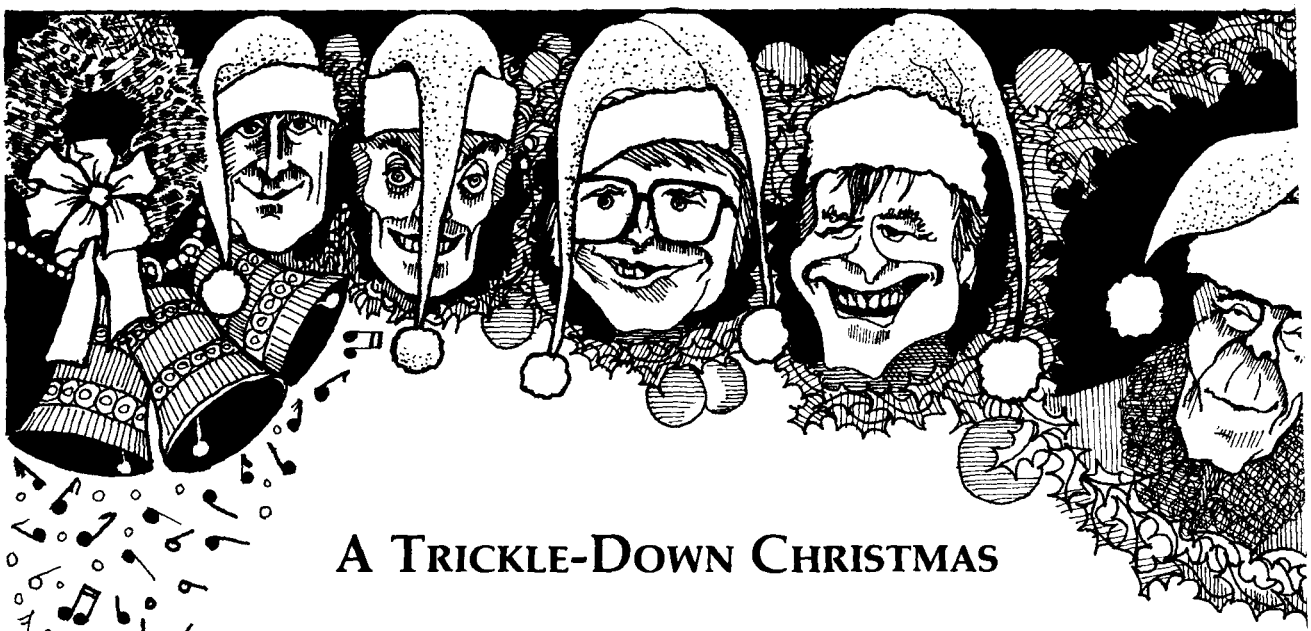

A Trickle-Down Christmas

By Henry Fairlie

CHRISTMAS AT OMB

Deck the halls with pois-on i-vy
Fa la la la la, la la la la;
'Tis our turn now to be live-ly
Fa la la la la, la la la la.
Keep the poor a-cross a bar-rel;
Fa la la, la la la, la la la,
Troll our new sup-ply-side car-ol,
Fa la la la la, la la la la.

See the pro-grams burn be-fore us,
Fa la la la la, la la la la;
Tales of hard-ship simp-ly bore us,
Fa la la la la, la la la la.
Let the poor their sor-rows drown,
Fa la la, la la la, la la la,
In Christ-mas cheer that trick-les down.
Fa la la la la, la la la la.

JANGLE BELLS

Dash-ing o-er the ranch,
As I while my term a-way
Leap-ing ev-'ry branch,
Jok-ing all the way.
Bells on Nan-cy ring,
Mak-ing her eyes bright,
What fun it is to be the Prez,
With the White House out of sight.
Trick-le down, trick-le down,
Trickle all the way.
Oh what fun to have such fun
And make the poor folk pay.

JOY TO THE LAND

Joy to the land!
James Watt is come!
Let earth now wear its crown;
Let ev-'ry wood
For him make room,
With all its trees cut down;
With all its trees cut down;
With all, with all its trees cut down.

Joy to the earth!
Its savior reigns!
Let no man cry alas,
While fields and streams,
Rocks, hills, and plains
Give up their nat-'ral gas
Give up their nat-'ral gas
Give up, give up their nat-'ral gas.

DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

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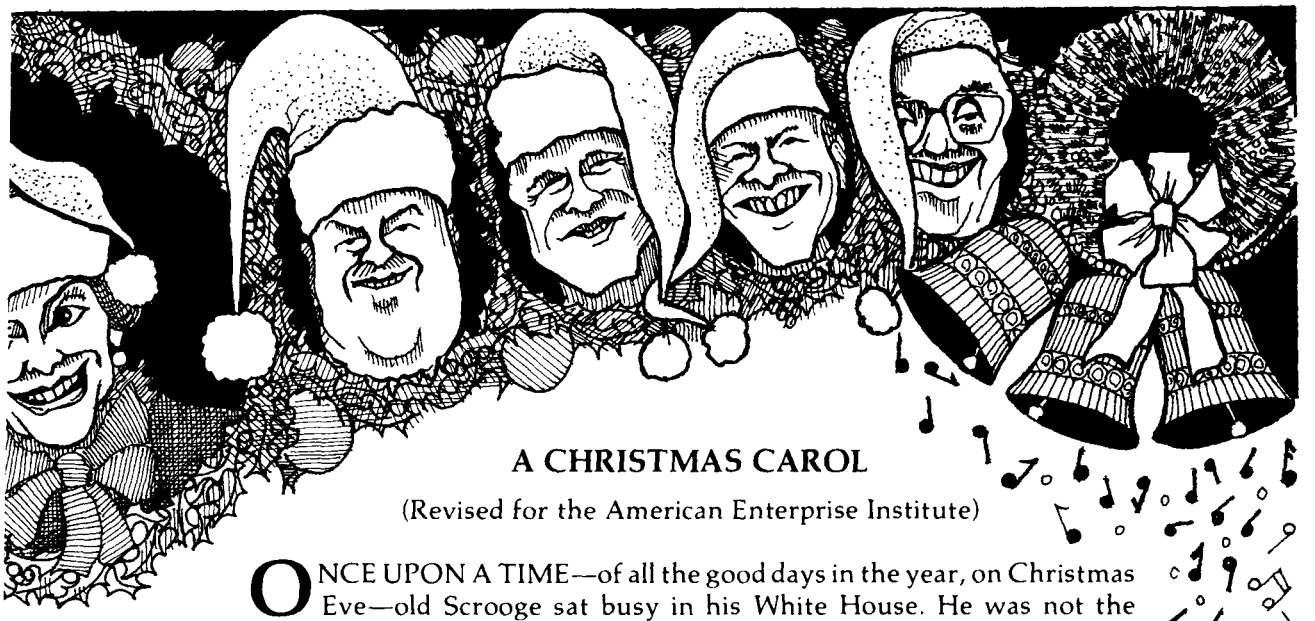

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

(Revised for the American Enterprise Institute)

ONCE UPON A TIME—of all the good days in the year, on Christmas Eve—old Scrooge sat busy in his White House. He was not the Scrooge of 100 years ago. He was rather jolly, and liked to tell little jokes.

But he was still Ronald Ebenezer Scrooge at heart.

He fell asleep and, when he awoke, it was dark in the room. As he reached for his jar of jelly beans, he was aware of an unearthly visitor at his elbow.

"I am the Ghost of Christmas Past," said the figure.

The Spirit took Scrooge by the hand, and led him through the streets where, long ago, he had been a Democrat, and showed him how happy he had been.

"Bah!" said Scrooge. "Humbug! I may have been happy, but I wasn't the President. The Democrats wouldn't have had me."

He fell asleep again and, when he awoke, another Spirit stood beside him.

"I am the Ghost of Christmas Present," said the figure.

It took Scrooge by the hand and led him to the home of a government clerk, Bob Cratchit, who was preparing a Christmas lunch with his wife. There never was such a goose. There never was such a pudding.

Then Bob proposed: "A Merry Christmas to us all, my dears."

"Bah!" said Scrooge. "Humbug! There's no such thing as a free lunch."

Then he saw Tiny Tim, last of all, get up on his crutches

"Where did he get those crutches?" asked Scrooge. "There's no block grant for crutches."

He fell asleep again and, when he awoke, a third Spirit was at his elbow.

"I am the Ghost of Christmas Yet To Come," said the figure. It took Scrooge by the hand and led him to a churchyard. It covered all of America. There were 220,000,000 gravestones. Scrooge read each one.

"Bah!" he said. "Humbug! My name is not here."

"No!" said the spirit. "You've left no one else alive. Except. . . ."

"Except . . . ," echoed Scrooge; and the Spirit pointed to Bob Cratchit, who had Tiny Tim on his shoulders.

"But I fired all government clerks in time for Christmas," said Scrooge.

The Christmas Spirits had taught him their lesson.

On Christmas Day, he went to Bob Cratchit's house, and handed him a RIF notice.

He then went back to his White House, and elected himself to a second term. He threw Tiny Tim's crutches on the fire. "Bah!" he said. "Humbug! The laffer always has the last laff."

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than a day. He rose, inspired, from his hospital bed and put the notion before an unsuspecting Cabinet. Composed entirely of either political castrati or men more fanatical than Mr. Begin, that body passed the proposal on to the Knesset with scarcely a murmur of apprehension, to say nothing of dissent. The Labor opposition is in such disarray that most of its members of Parliament simply boycotted the session, stunned that they were being coerced into voting quickly on a matter that deserved nothing less than a full national debate in the press, the trade union movement, and the parties. That's how important issues are usually dealt with in Israel, and it is a mark of Mr. Begin's disdain for the habits of democracy that he has used other methods to accomplish this deed. But Mr. Begin is a fastidious legalist, which doubtless means that he is now convinced that the population has actually clasped the Golan to its bosom. His success will not be a famous victory. What with the boycotters and those voting "no," the annexation passed with less than a majority of the Knesset in favor.

Perhaps the Prime Minister has been vouchsafed the revelation that the Golan is now a part of the historical land of Israel, severed from the Jewish patrimony only by colonial caprice. This may explain why, out of the blue, the Golan arrived on the Knesset docket. Another explanation is that Mr. Begin thought he could sneak in his little annexation under cover of the Polish enormity.

A more clinical explanation might also be considered. As Israel and its friends measure the standing of the Jewish state in the international community, its position had dramatically improved in recent weeks. There were indications that several African countries, which had broken diplomatic contacts with Israel under pain of the petrodollar whiplash, were preparing to reestablish relations and increase trade. The French foreign minister seemed to throw cold water on the once highly touted European initiative with its inevitable pro-PLO thrust. The debacle of the Arab summit at Fez had finally demonstrated to all but the world's official Pollyannas that no peace plan with Israel—not even a harsh *diktat*—was likely to command the assent of her neighbors. And then there was the team of Libyan tourists sent by Colonel Qaddafi to visit President Reagan. In discernible ways, things were easing up on Israel, getting tougher on the Arabs. It's our surmise that such a circumstance is precisely what Mr. Begin cannot tolerate. He fulfills his perceived mission only in adversity. And that's what he has again brought down on himself and his country. It is very sad and to no purpose.

But before the self-righteous chorus does its full number, we should understand that the blather about how the Golan annexation hinders peace prospects is indeed blather. The reason is that Syria has always refused to negotiate with Israel, both before the Golan Heights was captured and after. Indeed, Syria's differences with other Arab states often come down to the charge that they are backsliders on Zionism. With the collusion of Western countries and the U.N., Syria has, in effect, already annexed large parts of Lebanon in an ongoing effort nurtured by dreams of old maps. More recently, Syria emplaced missile batteries in southern Lebanon which the U.S. government pledged it would persuade Syria to remove. Mr. Reagan made this pledge, understanding that these missiles were a threat to Israel's security and that they were violations of a previous Syrian-Israeli status quo that had been brokered by the U.S. Ambassador Habib has been back and forth to Damascus many times, and there are no signs that the missiles will go. Washington has forbidden Israel to take these installations out by itself. In some measure, then, the annexation of the Golan can be seen as Israel's response, inappropriate as it may be, to the failure of diplomacy in the latest Middle East missile crisis. It was not the first of these failures and not the first of these crises. Israel merits no support on its Golan moves, but Syria deserves no sympathy.

Where does the union go from here?

SOLIDARITY RIVEN

EVEN BEFORE General Jaruzelski's military clampdown, Solidarity had been approaching a crisis of its own. That is probably one cogent reason why Jaruzelski considered the moment ripe for taking the risk of a massive confrontation, which may yet be followed perhaps by a general strike, perhaps by a mutiny of Polish soldiers refusing to shoot at strikers, and, in the end, perhaps even by Russian intervention.

The first major test for Jaruzelski's party-cum-army coup against the Polish people will be Solidarity's ability to recover from the shock and to respond with widespread industrial action. If the rank and file of the trade union movement, spontaneously or under the guidance of the skeleton Solidarity leadership, can be mobilized into making an overpowering gesture of disruptive protest, despite the military's threat of penalties, including death, then the next frightening stage will have been reached: the Polish Army will be required to use force against the people. If a substantial number of Polish soldiers refuse, which is likely, then Poland's fraternal neighbors—East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and, above all, the Soviet Union—may well believe it is time to intervene. If not, Solidarity will demand on its own terms—through its strike weapon—the end of martial law and the retreat of Jaruzelski's government. If that were to occur, Solidarity itself in

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effect would be taking over the government—hardly an eventuality to produce Kremlin approval.

Yet apparently the reason Jaruzelski took drastic action now is because he hoped to forestall the Russian invasion that would, according to his calculations, have been inevitable later. For those of us who still wish to see Poland continue to grow toward a greater measure of pluralism, freedom, and independence, the picture is not yet irredeemably bleak. Jaruzelski is presumably hoping to shock the Solidarity leadership—or at least the more amenable part of it—into the accommodation he has been seeking for the past two months. That means no more Solidarity requests for free elections or for referenda in which the Communist Party (to be precise, the Polish United Workers' Party) would certainly be humiliated; no more requests, in short, for Solidarity to have a formal veto over government, let alone to take it over, as some Solidarity radicals had recently been demanding. If Jaruzelski's brutal conditions are met, then he would argue that the *odnowa* ("renewal," the Communist euphemism for what, in fact, has been a revolution) can continue its process of liberalizing both the politics and economy of Poland, but within strictly defined limits. Can Lech Walesa and Solidarity accept that?

The trouble is that although the vast majority of Poles support Solidarity and virulently oppose communism as preached and practiced by the heirs of Stalin, they are uncertain exactly what kind of system they are for. Widespread anti-Soviet and anti-Russian feeling is strikingly obvious to any visitor to Poland. But as Jaruzelski became increasingly frustrated in his attempt to forge a kind of overseeing national caretaker council in conjunction with Solidarity and the Church, the Polish people began to question what the role of Solidarity should be. Jaruzelski was probably trying to capitalize on Solidarity's internal debate by pouncing at a moment when the movement's own internal questions had not yet been resolved.

SOME POLES wanted Solidarity to come to an accord with Jaruzelski, while others—the majority, I would say—wanted to push the government further into a corner, to extract promises of elections in which the Communist Party would be obliterated, and to wrest a measure of independence from the Soviet Union that would have been laughed off as ridiculous if suggested a year ago. Jaruzelski's clampdown is meant to take advantage of this tactical division within Solidarity in order to drag the moderates into a grudging accord with government, while leaving the radicals out in the cold or in prison. It was particularly significant that Jaruzelski has not, so far as we know, arrested Walesa himself, who had been pleading with the rank and file of Solidarity to impose self-restraint.

It is very difficult, however, to see how Jaruzelski's precipitate action (and it is not yet clear whether in fact it was his own idea or the Kremlin's) will stem the revolutionary Polish nationalist tide without appalling bloodshed unless he backs at least part way down. The momentum of Solidarity is probably too great to be halted peacefully by coup, by manipulation, or by the cleansing and rejuvenation of Polish communism. No Pole will be impressed by the token arrests of Edward Gierek, the former Communist leader, and a few of his henchmen. The Polish Communist Party is politically dead and cannot be revived except as a vehicle of Soviet coercion or terror. That, indeed, is one of the reasons why Jaruzelski had to resort to the strong arm of the Polish army. The question is whether he, or more likely the Soviets, will be forced to embark on a long reign of repression, or whether Solidarity will simply submit in the face of its exemplary warning.

CLEARLY, COMMUNIST revisionism in Poland—performed within the Communist system—seemed to be an increasingly hopeless task. The "liberal" wing of the party, epitomized by Deputy Premier Mieczyslaw Rakowski, had been tacitly suggesting reforms that by Eastern bloc standards were astonishingly generous. It was whispered that small, "safe" parties such as the Peasants Party and the Democratic Party, which were already technically in coalition with the Communists, would be granted greater independence. Official democratic parties, and perhaps even a Christian Democratic Party, might be tolerated. Parliament might even be divided into two chambers, with a freely elected lower house dominated by known Solidarity supporters and with an upper chamber or senate in which the Communists would retain blocking power. But for most of Solidarity these compromises smacked of too little, too late. By the end of last month the apparently unstoppable momentum of Solidarity dictated that neither the Communist Party nor any represenative of Moscow could be allowed to have the final say in Polish politics.

The pace of events was illustrated by the changing opinions of one of Solidarity's cleverest and most level-headed advisers, Jacek Kuron, founder of the recently disbanded Committee for Workers' Defense, itself a sort of think tank for Solidarity policymaking. Three months ago Kuron was imploring Solidarity *not* to demand free elections to parliament, for fear of provoking Russian intervention. But when I spoke to him a few weeks ago, he had decided that only by submitting to free elections (and to the disgrace of communism at the polls) could the Soviets restore stability in Poland; and that stability, plus Polish guarantees to stay within the Warsaw Pact and grant full military facilities to the Soviet Union, was the best reward the Soviets could now expect. But now it appears that the Kremlin considered such a "reward" to be insultingly inadequate. And Kuron is behind bars.

So Solidarity will have to decide whether to act within a newly reinforced straitjacket or whether to

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confront Jaruzelski with all the might of the strike weapon. This is essentially a tactical dilemma, not an ideological one. But even if there is a last-minute compromise and martial law is lifted, Solidarity will face the same longer-term political questions. The need to identify the nature of the movement will become stronger. At present, it is notable that outside Poland both the international left (apart from the dwindling band of pro-Moscow Communists) and the international right (apart from the bankers) claim Solidarity as their own. Does Solidarity have an ideology at all?

At first, of course, the movement denied overtly political aspirations and admitted only to an interest in material benefits and right of worker trade unionism. That, in the context of East Europe, was revolutionary enough. Then it began coyly to call itself a "social movement." But eventually the political dynamism at the guts of Solidarity began to assert itself. (See "Solidarity's Dilemma," by Abraham Brumberg, TNR, November 25.) A visit to the regional headquarters of Solidarity in Warsaw instantly revealed the movement's rampant anti-Sovietism, expressed in the extravaganza of slogans and cartoons festooning the walls. "Workers of the world, forgive me," reads a bubble emerging from Karl Marx's mouth. Another cartoon is captioned, "The Economic Disaster: A Tragedy Written Produced and Directed By The Polish Communist Party, Now In Its 36th Year." Activists wear badges declaring "Soviet tanks, no thanks," or even, in mockery of official anti-Solidarity phraseology, "Creeping Counterrevolutionary" or "Antisocialist element."

BUT, despite the unity of sentiment against the Soviets, ideological divisions within the movement have been growing. Oddly, the "laic left" (*lyewica laica*) has been pitting itself against the self-proclaimed "true Poles." The former includes a few Trotskyists but are essentially social democratic, pragmatic, and secularist. The latter are more bellicose, romantic nationalists, strongly Catholic, harking back to the symbols of pre-Communist Poland: church and state. On the extreme nationalist wing, there is a tinge of anti-Semitism, which sections of the Communist Party have also tried to exploit. Yet even on the right there is a curiously egalitarian tradition: there is little desire to make state industry private or to raise ceiling of land possession above the present 50 hectare limit. Though liberal market economists have begun to be heard, what is more noticeable on the right is the desire to destroy the Communist Party altogether, and to force Solidarity into calling the Russian bluff again and again, demanding an increasing measure of independence from Moscow. The danger has been that threats from the Party and Moscow had lost credibility: their bluff had been called once too often. That, perhaps, is one reason Jaruzelski has tried to prove that the Party still has the heart to call in men and guns. The laic left had been warning the foolhardy against such provocation, but the romantic right—with firm cogency—pointed out that only by such "foolhardiness" did Solidarity make the gains that had hitherto been considered inconceivable.

An issue that illustrates the breadth of ideological differences within Solidarity is the argument over "worker self-management." The left interprets this catch phrase as real grass-roots worker self-rule: workers should run their own factories. But the right argues that self-management merely means the decentralization of industry: factories would become more efficient if freed from the constraints of Russian-style centralized planning. The right and the left agree that the phrase can be easily emptied of political content; it could merely be a code word for an attack on *nomenklatura*, the noxious custom whereby Party hacks are appointed to all managerial positions regardless of professional qualifications.

A HANDFUL of Solidarity activists and some commentators in the West still feel the Communist system can reform itself from within, that a rigorous form of socialism is in principle laudable, and that its implementation under misguided Russian tutelage has been at fault. Jaruzelski and the approving Russians presumably still hope to restore Poland to a stability based on communism, with a moratorium placed on immediate liberal political change. The heart of Solidarity, right and left, is loath to accept such a compromise. They have tasted a little too much freedom in the past year. But Walesa and Jaruzelski may yet try to persuade the Polish people that this—for the moment—is the best offer.

Walesa is a man of enormous stature, though quite a few of the moment's leftist intellectuals unfairly accuse him of lacking ideological depth. What they mean is that he is a pragmatist less interested in political theories than in pushing Poland along its tightrope between vibrant Polish nationalism and Russian sensitivity, the possibility of the disease of freedom proving contagious in East Europe. More important, however, is Walesa's need to constrain the old-fashioned nationalism within Solidarity. This thought, by no means socialist in any sense of the word, has created the dominant mood within Solidarity during the past few months. If Jaruzelski agrees to draw back from confrontation leading to a bloodbath and a Soviet invasion, Walesa will be challenged with his most arduous and delicate task to date: postponing the desire of the Polish people for real independence. And that, of course, is what they have been tirelessly seeking for 200 years.

XAN SMILEY

Xan Smiley is a writer on foreign affairs who recently returned from Poland.

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How the Soviet Union retains its 'friends.'

The Cost Of Pax Sovietica

By Nick Eberstadt And Tom Ricks

SINCE THE DEATH of Stalin, the Soviet Union's treatment of its allies and friends has followed a broad pattern of trading economic support for political control—that is, of accepting financial loss as the price of empire. In recent years the costs of this system of governance have multiplied, even as the Soviet Union itself has entered a period of increasing economic difficulty. The consequences of the dilemma first became apparent in the most expensive region of the empire, Eastern Europe—and specifically in Poland. Today we see the Soviet Union trying to reassert its political control over the Polish people while simultaneously decreasing its economic support. Over the next two decades, the men who rule the USSR are likely to face this kind of situation repeatedly. Whatever the eventual outcome in Poland, it will very likely become a precedent that will loom over the Soviet Union's relations with its allies.

The Soviet Union has three kinds of allies. The first are governments it has installed in contiguous nations, and now supports through armed occupation. These are Mongolia, Afghanistan, and the Warsaw Pact nations. The second are Marxist-Leninist nations overseas. Some of these, such as Cuba and Vietnam, are ruled by regimes that came to power on their own terms, and largely by their own exertion; others, such as the ruling cliques in Angola and Ethiopia, have always depended on the support of Soviet bloc troops. Finally, there are "radical" but non-Leninist leaders in the poor world: included in this category would be Hafez Assad, Muammar Qaddafi, and Yasir Arafat. Without the help of these nations and men, the Soviet Union could not achieve many of its military and diplomatic ends. Yet these political allies and ideological friends also present Moscow with a number of strategic and economic problems.

The third world radicals with whom the Soviet Union allies itself are very often consummate politicians—and, as the adage has it, politicians cannot be bought, only rented. For the Soviets, the terms of lease often have proved to be exorbitant, and repossession has often come unexpectedly. The waning of the era of decolonization has sharpened Soviet disappointment in the third world. Although it is obvious that the Soviet Union could benefit from an alliance with, say, guerrilla leader Robert Mugabe in his fight for control of Rhodesia, it is not so clear to President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe how the Soviets can help him in the more complex task of raising the living standards of his people while assuring the sovereignty of his regime. In fact, the Soviet Union cannot offer very much. As the International Institute for Strategic Studies observed in the 1980 edition of *Strategic Survey*, the Soviet Union finds it difficult to compete with the West in providing aid, technology, and anything more civilized than the tools of war. "In 1980 alone," the *Survey* observed, "Western economic assistance to the third world surpassed total Soviet non-military assistance for the 25 years previous to 1979."

The men in the Kremlin possess an enormous distrust of their friends in the poor nations. This is not unreasonable. More often than not, Soviet investment in "radical" third world leaders who were not avowedly Marxist-Leninist has not paid off. No matter how mutually advantageous the Soviets' relations with the third world leaders have been at times, such alliances ultimately have proven neither stable nor reliable. Sekou Toure, Sukarno, Nkrumah, Sadat, and, in his own way, Siad Barre, must be weighed against Arafat, Qaddafi, and, in her own way, Indira Gandhi. Faced with this political deficit, Soviet leaders have drawn back from Khrushchev's policy of extending help to the third world's anti-colonialist "nationalist bourgeoisie" (Sukarno, for example) in favor of a return to the Stalinist practice of trusting important work to solidly "socialist" regimes.

Colonel Qaddafi may harbor a hatred for the United States, but he is in power today because in 1969 the U.S., aware of his then undisguised anti-Soviet sentiments, did not oppose his revolution against King Idris. In any event, Qaddafi rules in a region where political supremacy is best measured in months. Arafat's aims are supported today by the Soviet Union, but eventually they may be better served by aid that is at once anti-Zionist *and* anti-Soviet, be it from Riyadh, Peking, or even Lagos. And although Gandhi has been

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driven into the Soviet embrace by her anti-Americanism and her fear of China, the Politburo knows that others in her nation do not share her specific fears and prejudices, and that she has been rejected by her people once already. When other independent nations make overtures toward the Soviets, as Mexico seems to have done in accepting "cooperating country" status in Comecon (the Soviet bloc economic organization), it is because they expect to glean certain specific, and usually short-term, advantages from the move. Although Mexico's maneuverings have encouraged the U.S. to discuss questions of oil and emigration, it would be highly unrealistic to expect Mexico to move from quiet observation to sympathetic participation in Comecon.

YET THE VIEW from the Soviet Foreign Ministry is not entirely bleak. Moscow's search for allies is shaped by the knowledge that a nation's interests are not always the same as those of all its politicians, and that it is politicians, not nations, who shake hands, sign agreements, and deliver orations. The men who direct Soviet foreign policy know how easy it is to find third world statesmen who believe their people are incapable of discerning their own best interests. It is the nature of politics and oppositions that in most nations, at any given time, factions can be found within the political elite who will deem it in the "objective" interest of the nation to accept foreign slush funds or military hardware, or who will even acquiesce in outside military intervention. In the Afghanistan of 1979, out of approximately 15 million people, there were fewer than 10,000 Marxists, and not even all of them wanted to see the Red Army move in. But a small fraction did, and that was enough. Nevertheless, quisling relationships, if not cemented by Soviet troops or Soviet proxies, are likely to be transient, for an unoccupied people usually finds means of impressing its interests upon an unresponsive regime.

For their part, overseas Marxist-Leninist regimes may have goals different from those of their Soviet patrons, but observed conflicts of interests have been relatively minor. Cuban hesitancy about participation in an assault on Eritrea may have been annoying, but it was hardly insurmountable; Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia may not have been exactly what the Soviet Union would have wanted at a time when it was pressing for acceptance of an increased Soviet presence in the Far East, but it did have its advantages.

The gravest Soviet difficulty with its friends is not political but financial. The economies of the Soviet Union's Marxist-Leninist friends have demonstrated a troubling inability to make themselves self-sufficient. Cuba and Vietnam (to say nothing of the states they occupy) are not economically viable. The external subsidies they require are likely to grow during the 1980s, precisely when the USSR, with growth rates lower than at any point in its peacetime history (and still falling), is apt to be least able to increase its aid.

In both Cuba and Vietnam, the deepening of "socialism" has not brought prosperity. In Cuba, rigid controls and economic mismanagement seem to have succeeded in bringing the economy to a precarious halt. According to one set of World Bank figures, Cuba's per capita GNP is smaller now than it was under Batista. If those numbers are accurate, Cuba has joined Cambodia and South Yemen in that exclusive club of nations whose economic output per person is lower today that it was 25 years ago. One startling indication of the state of Cuban affairs, Sovietologist Jiri Valenta recently wrote, is that "in 1980, for the first time in its history, Cuba . . . had to import a large quantity of sugar instead of exporting it." At the moment, Moscow's subsidy to Havana (in the form of concessionary trade arrangements and lapsed loans) amounts to about $4 billion a year. This amount is approximately half as large as Cuba's own internally generated GNP is thought to be. Military aid to support the 40,000 or so Cuban troops and advisers abroad comes in addition to this amount. It currently runs at perhaps $2 billion.

Vietnam is even worse off. Contrary to expectations, the end of the war and the subsequent program of "socialist reconstruction" have lowered output and living standards. Although statistics on Vietnam are not entirely reliable, a 1978-79 World Bank mission reported that in post-collectivization Vietnam, basic consumer goods such as grain, cloth, and cooking oil were as scarce as they are in India and Bangladesh. Sympathetic observers such as William Shawcross report that conditions have worsened since that time. The Soviet Union has found it necessary to ship several million tons of grain to Vietnam in each of the past few years to alleviate the difficulties caused by "bad weather." State Department estimates suggest that the total Soviet grant to Vietnam now exceeds $1 billion a year; others have put the figure at two and even three times that level. This would mean that Soviet money accounts for at least an eighth of Vietnam's economic consumption, and perhaps as much as a quarter.

THE SOVIET Union's sub-Saharan friends have fared no better. Angola's per capita food production is now at about half the 1970 level. And in Ethiopia (according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture), per capita food output is 30 percent lower today than it was when Colonel Mengistu's Dergue ousted Emperor Haile Selassie in the midst of a famine in 1974.

Over the next few years, the cost of supporting Vietnam, Cuba, Ethiopia, and the Soviet Union's other economically inefficient but militarily useful clients is likely to increase. So, it seems, will the Soviets' domestic economic problems. If the Politburo chooses to continue to bankroll its impoverished surrogates, surely it will also look for new ways to use

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them. There is evidence that the search is on. Edward Luttwak has reported, in *Commentary*, for example, that Soviet advisers have been training Cuban forces in combat methods appropriate to conditions of the desert. Similarly, 50,000 Vietnamese "guest workers" are now laboring in the factories of Warsaw Pact countries, according to a *Christian Science Monitor* account printed in November. Cuban troops and Vietnamese coolies are unlikely to asume new burdens solely on the basis of their admiration of the Soviet Union; every new job they take on will require that much more in client support from the Soviet government.

As measured by the unreliable medium of international foreign exchange, the Soviet Union may spend some $10 billion a year on its proxies in the third world. High as these costs seem, they are small when compared with the expense of maintaining the Soviet Union's European allies.

SOVIET control in Eastern Europe is decisive, but it is also subject to a number of limitations. The task of mobilizing unwilling captives for competition against one's adversaries is not an easy one. Since the death of Stalin, total terror has been ruled out as impractical in Soviet dealings with Eastern Europe. To cope with the bourgeois aspirations and nationalist sentiments of their European protectorates, the Soviets have engaged in a delicate game of coax and menace, backing up their suggestions with the 30 Red Army divisions stationed west of the Soviet border.

This modus operandi, so unhappy for the peoples of Communist Europe, is also far from ideal for Moscow's leaders. In order to cow Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union must be assured of military predominance over its subject nations. From this political necessity flow both strategic and economic consequences. Soviet occupation of these nations must be tempered by the reality that, left to their own devices, the soldiers of the Warsaw Pact could not necessarily be relied upon to point their rifles westward. Thus the armies of the Eastern states can never be more than police forces—and we are now seeing whether they can be relied upon to play even that role in Poland. The prospect of sharing their most sophisticated weaponry with the governments of Eastern Europe is, and must remain, out of the question. As Adam Ulam noted in *Expansion and Coexistence*, the Soviets' repossession of the Czechoslovakian government from Alexander Dubček would have been incalculably more risky if deliverable nuclear warheads had been in Dubček's possession.

As a result of its uneasiness with its involuntary allies, the Soviet Union is obliged to assume almost the full cost of the military competition with NATO, accounting for 80 percent of the Warsaw Pact budget. (The United States, by comparison, pays 40 percent of NATO's expenses.) Though the economies of Eastern Europe are more productive than the Soviet Union's, their share in the defense of "socialism" is far lower. According to most reliable estimates, the military absorbs somewhere between 10 percent and 18 percent of the Soviet Union's GNP; in Eastern Europe, the average fraction is about 3 percent, ranging from an estimated 1.4 percent in Rumania to an estimated 6.3 percent in East Germany. It is unlikely that the Soviet government, acutely aware of financial constraints and always eager to cut costs, would have taken upon itself the full costs of the military race unless the risks of distributing the expense seemed forbidding.

The Soviets' relationship with Eastern Europe depends upon rewards as well as tanks. The peoples of Eastern Europe were somewhat sensitive to comfort when they came under Soviet rule. They have shown, for example, that they are bourgeois in the sense that they will revolt *before* they are starving. To keep them complacent, the Soviets have allowed something to arise that would never be sanctioned in the motherland: a fragile and tenuous, but nonetheless unmistakable, consumerism. The peoples of Eastern Europe were granted (albeit tacitly) the right to expect material conditions to improve and creature comforts to multiply.

Encouraging prosperity under the Soviet mode of economic organization is, of course, a problematic task. In an effort to increase growth while maintaining stability in Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union relaxed some of its rules of "socialist" organization, though never to the point where control of the system came into question. Yet simply tinkering with the Soviet model has proven insufficient, so the Soviet Union has also attempted to encourage economic growth with actual subsidies. This is a fact that is generally ignored by Western observers. The common notion about East bloc trade with the Soviet Union conforms to the Polish joke: "We give them our meat, and in return they take our coal." In the days of Stalin, when control over the satellites was absolute and the dictator's first task was to rebuild his shattered economy, this may have been so. But today the joke is wrong: During 1979, Poland's per capita meat consumption was nearly twice that of the Soviet Union.

THE FACT IS that Eastern Europe registers as a deficit on the Soviet ledgers. Because trade within Comecon is valued at artificial prices, the size and rate of growth of the deficit have not been generally recognized. In terms of rubles, the Soviet Union runs a slight profit in its trade with Eastern Europe.

But when Comecon trade is valued by prevailing world prices, a different picture emerges. Soviet trade patterns with Eastern Europe are those of an undeveloped area's relations with the advanced economies: in return for Soviet oil, gas, and timber, Eastern Europe provides the USSR with machinery and finished consumer goods. Eastern Europe, of course, is hardly the ideal supplier of precision products. In the hot-

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house of Eastern Europe's economy, plants that could not survive elsewhere foist their sour fruits on captive markets. Comecon trade overvalues the worth of its sorry creations by a factor of two or three, if compared with what might be bought on the world market. At the same time, the Soviet Union, which during the 1970s became the world's largest oil producer, supplies the Warsaw Pact nations with raw materials at prices that are the stuff of nostalgia in the West. The discrepancy beween Comecon prices and world prices is most apparent in oil, which the USSR now sells to its captive states at half or less of what it might fetch on the free market. Currently the Soviet Union is obliged not only to deliver more than 75 million tons of oil annually—the equivalent of over 1.5 million barrels a day—but also to provide something like 15 billion thousand cubic feet of natural gas. On December 11, Czech officials confirmed to Michael Dobbs of the *Washington Post* that the Soviet Union is planning to break that obligation and reduce energy supplies to Eastern Europe by 10 percent. The openness of the announcement can be taken as an indication of the severity of Soviet economic difficulties; its timing should be taken as a lesson, for it seems to be an economic complement to the political crackdown in Poland.

All told, according to calculations made by economists Jan Vanous and Michael Marrese, the Soviet Union's 1980 subsidy to Eastern Europe comes to roughly $20 billion. This is not an inconsiderable factor in the economic health, such as it is, of Eastern Europe. If the World Bank's reckoning of the GNP for the Warsaw Pact nations at about $400 billion is correct, then the Soviet subsidy constitutes 5 percent of the total "output" of the Eastern bloc. And if, as many experts believe, standard economic accounting methods overstate output in these countries by exaggerating the quality of their goods, then the Eastern Bloc's economic dependence on the Soviet Union is even greater than these comparisons would suggest.

AS OIL prices rise and the quality of goods in Western markets improves, the financial costs of maintaining Eastern Europe and its inflexible, inefficient economies will increase. These are hardly unbearable costs: $20 billion a year is a small price even for a faltering Soviet economic machine to pay for control over the lives of more than 100 million people. This de facto Marshall Plan for Eastern Europe, provided grudgingly to unwilling recipients, costs the Soviet Union no more than 2 percent of its GNP in foregone earnings. Centrally planned economies, moreover, aim for political control rather than efficiency; if the second can be had, all well and good, but it is the first which Communist systems strive for, and obtain just about as effectively as Western systems obtain profits.

It would be a mistake to overlook the role Western Europe has played in underwriting the economic prosperity of the Soviet satellites. During the 1970s, much of the increase in Eastern European economic growth was financed by Western European loans, resulting in a debt of nearly $70 billion. It is not clear how much more will be forthcoming. A fundamental financial crisis seems to be pending, with a frightened but financially prudent Western Europe unwilling to further finance Soviet domination of Eastern Europe even as the Soviet Union scrambles to reduce the strain on its own economy.

FOR 20 YEARS Soviet leaders have directed their diplomatic efforts at achieving political "detente" with Western Europe. But much to their displeasure, they have not been able to forestall pressures for a true detente with their own Eastern European subject states—that is, for a relaxation of Soviet control over social policies. To some extent, this is actually a consequence of the Soviet bloc's pursuit of detente with the West during the 1970s. Twenty years ago, Soviet consideration of an invasion of Poland would have been a simple matter of examining logistical difficulties. Today, even if the USSR decides to risk the military aspect of an anti-Poland operation, it will also need to think about potential financial and technological sacrifices, and possible political and economic setbacks. Can the Soviet Union assume most of the $20- to $30-billion Polish debt to the West, on top of the 8 billion rubles Poland already owes the USSR? Can the Soviet economy survive a cutoff of vital technology and trade from the West? Can the Soviet government afford to go on demonstrating to its third world allies that to be a friend of the Soviet Union means to risk invasion?

However, most of the pressures for this detente emanate not from Moscow or Paris or London, but from Eastern Europe itself. It has been possible to find technocrats willing to rule and direct the Warsaw Pact nations for the Soviets, but the peoples of Eastern Europe have no great love for either the men in Kremlin or their troops. In most, though not all, Eastern European countries, the forces of patriotism and government are in fundamental opposition. The conflict between the two was easier to suppress in the late 1940s and early 1950s, when Eastern Europe's societies were exhausted and its politics Stalinized. Stalin's successors decided that these nations would only remain pacific under a delicate and controlled program of economic development. This required certain freedoms of thought and movement, and of contact with the West to an extent unthinkable in the Soviet Union. Even more than the Soviets, the Eastern European regimes have felt the pressure of the post-Stalin contradiction of not being able to continue in the dictator's path, yet not being able to stray far from it, of presiding over a system dangerous either to continue or to reform. The Brezhnev-era attempt to alleviate their client states' difficulties with economic palliatives has only made the dilemma more immediate.

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If the Western nations were to do nothing, pressures for detente in Eastern Europe would mount anyway; perhaps not in Bulgaria, where Todor Zhivkov can speak of his people as the "loyal younger brothers to the great Russians," and perhaps not in Rumania, where Nicolae Ceauşescu has managed to blend nationalism and "Brezhnevism" into a unique Transylvanian variant of totalitarianism. But in East Germany, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Poland, pressures for economic and political independence from the Soviet Union can be expected to grow stronger no matter what the West does.

Constraint breeds constraint; for reasons of ideology and security, Soviet leaders feel unable to withdraw from Eastern Europe. In light of current Soviet economic difficulties, and of the strong likelihood of their becoming more severe during the 1980s, it is nearly as improbable that the Soviet leadership could attempt to increase the Soviet presence in, or subsidy to, Eastern Europe. Thus it seems likely that the Soviets will attempt to muddle through—that is, mount a desultory attempt to contain and minimize a continuing crisis. Such a half-hearted strategy is really no strategy at all, for brushfire responses can only slow, not reverse, the political drift of much of Eastern Europe. Eventually there might come a flashpoint crisis that demands (in the Soviet view) a military response. Yet the peoples of Eastern Europe appear to have learned well the lessons of Hungary and Czechoslovakia, and now know how to probe without provoking an invasion. For many Warsaw Pact citizens, such a standoff, no matter how uneasy, would bring them close to victory, far closer than they have been for decades.

THE WEST is in a position to help move the Eastern Europeans beyond a mere stalemate. Soviet-East European relations do not exist in a vacuum. Given the situation developing in the Warsaw Pact countries, Western Europe and the United States, despite recent events in Poland, might be able to encourage a gradual relaxation of the Soviet grip on the economies and peoples of Eastern Europe. This is not to be confused with updated versions of the 1952 Republican Party platform's call for "rolling back" the Soviets to the Ukraine. (As John Spanier has noted, that plank "seems to have been devised primarily to roll back the Democrats in the United States," and it was all too easy to move from that kind of blustering for domestic consumption to Radio Free Europe's false encouragement of Hungarian hopes in 1956.)

For the West, the advantages of "Finlandizing" Eastern Europe are self-evident. Although in Soviet eyes Finlandization is something to be foisted upon one's enemies, the Finlandization of Eastern Europe could well prove to be the least undesirable outcome for an empire facing the problems that the USSR seems likely to encounter in the coming decades. After all, as William Pfaff has observed, of the 12 nations on the Soviet periphery, the one causing the least worries for the Politburo, the one whose border with the Soviets is most peaceful, is Finland, which was beaten by the Soviet Union during World War II but was never occupied. Finland sustains its own economy, and indeed, through its trade deals, has been made to play a disproportionately large role in sustaining the Soviet empire. With its army of 40,000 men—100 times smaller than the Soviet armed forces—Finland poses no military threat to the USSR. And Finland tacitly allows the Soviet Union a veto over its foreign policy.

Yet, as the *Economist* has noted, Finland is the only democracy east of the Baltic. It has a nominally free press and holds free elections; its citizens enjoy freedom of speech and movement, and make changes in their lives more or less as they see fit. The American mind recoils at the notion of settling for a life that is half-free. But this is surely more satisfactory to the people of Finland than the situation of the Warsaw Pact nations is to the peoples of Eastern Europe.

WHAT CAN American policymakers do to encourage rather than frustrate this possibility? Simply recognizing the possibility would be a step in the right direction. At bare minimum, our responsibility to the Poles and to other Eastern European peoples is not to get in their way, and, especially, not to mislead them; there should never again be a situation in which American promises are given with no intention of their being kept, as happened with Radio Free Europe in 1956.

Americans could further help the people of Eastern Europe by keeping an eye on Western bankers. Only one side in East-West relations has ever attempted to separate business from politics. Western governments must scrupulously examine the loans being granted to the Warsaw Pact nations by Western financial institutions. If loans are dispensed carelessly or out of fear of losing funds already expended, we not only run the risk of subsidizing the inefficient systems which retard economic progress, but also of suffocating political progress by underwriting regimes which would otherwise themselves be forced by economics to liberalize. Yet loans also could be granted explicitly as rewards to be given after each successful step in economic liberalization. That can happen only if Western banks act both as a consortium and as stewards of Western interests; right now it is not clear that they can do either.

Finally, the West must stop subsidizing the Soviet imperium. Currently, Japanese, European, and even American corporations and governmental bodies make the Soviet task of controlling its allies far easier than it might otherwise be by granting Moscow financial room to maneuver. In Angola, to take one case, Soviet proxies are now making the jungles safe for the MPLA's varient of "socialism." This is an expensive task: by some estimates, it costs as much as $3 million per

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day. The USSR has been spared the necessity of footing this bill. Instead, Gulf Oil has stepped smartly into the breach, and is currently paying $5 million a day in royalties to the Luanda government. But it is not necessary to look to exotic regions of the world for further examples. Western corporations are competing against each other to participate in the 3,000-mile-long gas pipeline from Western Siberia to Western Europe, which during the next decade is expected to increase the Soviet Union's hard currency receipts by 50 percent, even as it gives the men in the Kremlin a foot on the oxygen line, as it were, of the nervous patients of Western Europe.

Readers of the Soviet journal *International Affairs* are familiar with the Marxist-Leninist view of the West, in which every economic and social disturbance is held to be an auspicious outcropping of economic crisis, another indication that the decrepit West is slouching toward the end of an era. This assessment is wrong; indeed, it is far more descriptive of the Soviet predicament. This is not to say that all is well in the West. Both the Soviet empire and the Western Alliance are pained, but by entirely different afflictions. Systemic economic difficulties and anti-state patriotism are the hallmarks of modern totalitarianism. The Western malaise is not precisely economic, but spiritual and moral. Among its many manifestations are, on the one hand, the evident unwillingness of the adherents of the European peace movement to defend their own societies, and, on the other hand, the evident willingness of Western industrialists and financiers to reap short-term profits at the expense of Eastern freedom and Western security.

The ailments of the superpowers are chronic, but not necessarily terminal. Whether East or West will emerge the more successful form this long-term competition depends largely upon their recuperative abilities. These are as yet unknown.

A fiscal theater of the absurd.

The Great Tax Benefit Sale

By William J. Quirk

DAVID STOCKMAN is the first to recognize that his gift for metaphor has gotten him into a lot of trouble he didn't need. (When he calls the Pentagon a "swamp" of waste and inefficiency, you can almost see the generals slogging around up to their hips.) If Stockman spoke like the usual boring bureaucrat or economist, his comments might have slipped away without notice. But a gift, even if it causes its owner some problems, is something to be cherished. Take the Reagan tax bill which passed in August. Who else could have described the lobbying leading to this latest tax Christmas tree so vividly? "Do you realize the greed that came to the forefront?" Stockman asked William Greider. "The hogs were really feeding. The greed level, the level of opportunism, just got out of control." Along the way, the hogs effectively repealed the corporate income tax and created the most exotic invention in tax history: the tax benefit sale. If one porker can't use his hyped-up tax credits and deductions, he now may sell them, for cash, to another.

It is as if the poor (or already fully tax-sheltered) couple next door were allowed to sell you the unused (or unneeded) tax exemption on one of their children. You pay the couple, say, $250 in cash for the exemption, which is for $1,000. If you are in the 50 percent tax bracket, your taxes immediately go down by $500. You are a total of $250 to the good, and so is the neighbor couple. Everyone benefits—except all the other taxpayers, who collectively will have to come up with an extra $500. Or you might sell your nonworking wife to a rich bachelor, who could then spread his income over two people and save a bundle in taxes. Naturally, under the business rules, you would retain your wife's services, since you would lease her back from the bachelor for some fraction of what he had paid you for her to begin with.

The revenue losses will be stunning: the Treasury estimates the five-year loss at $27 billion. Many independent tax experts think the loss cannot be reasonably ascertained, but will certainly be closer to $60 billion. By November 13, the deadline for buying retroactive tax benefits on equipment already in use, *Fortune* estimates that $15 billion of benefits had been sold. This is a grievous blow to a deficit-ridden budget. What are we getting for this tremendous cost? Well, General Electric is thought to have sheltered its income for the next five years. IBM has purchased

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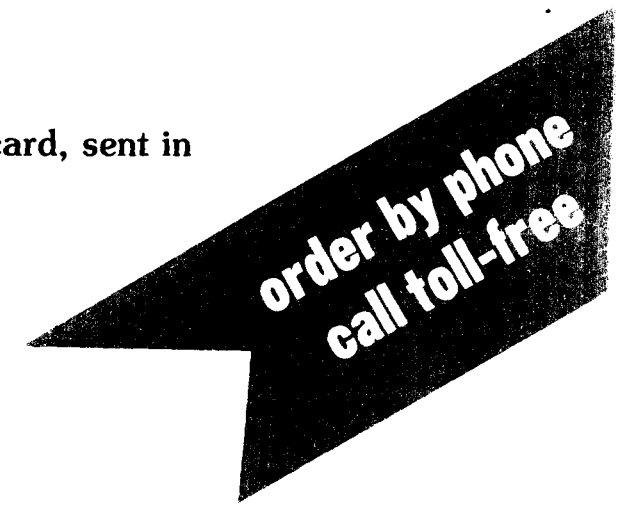

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$1 billion of benefits from Ford. Occidental Petroleum, which is so heavy with foreign tax credits that it pays no U.S. tax, sold about $100 million in benefits to Marsh & McLennon, an insurance broker. Exxon is said to be buying benefits, but it won't talk.

The many-zeroed figures attracted other characters to the barnyard. The tax benefit sale quickly became a new growth industry. The investment bankers, who make the deals which bring the hogs together with the feed, had made about $60 million by November 13, and the sky is the limit. First Boston, a leader in this lucrative traffic, issued a "Tax Benefit Transfer" book, published in a numbered edition, which, I am reliably told, described the sale of goodies in mouth-watering detail. (In view of rising public criticism, First Boston refuses to show the book to the public or the press. They say it is proprietary.)

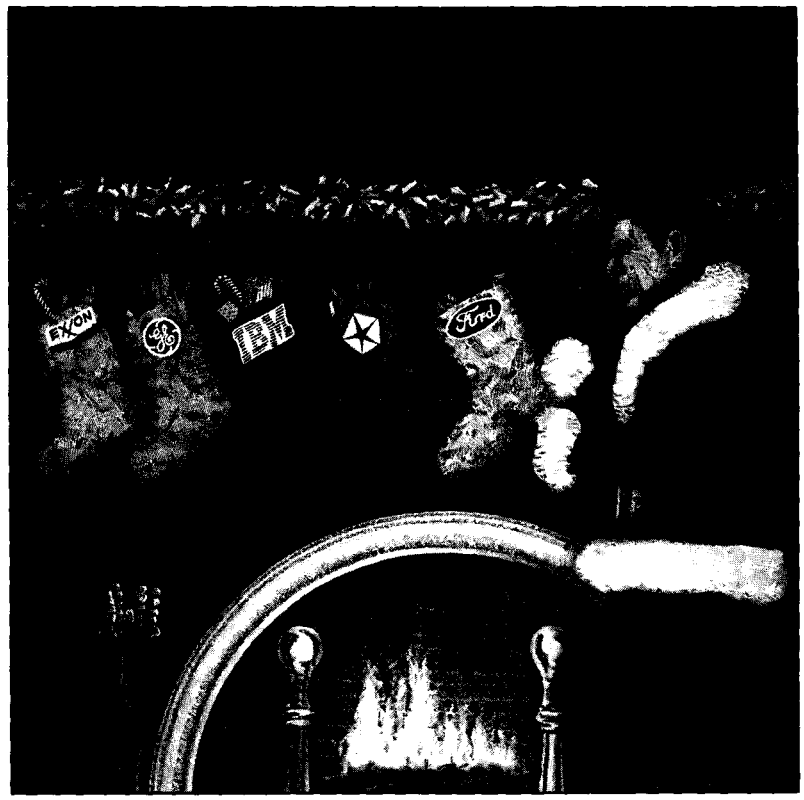

ILLUSTRATION BY MICHAEL GIBBS FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

What's the idea behind tax benefit sales? The real idea, of course, is that our porcine friends, understandably enough, don't want to pay taxes. They could have tried the direct approach, which would have been to seek the repeal of the corporate tax or its reduction to a very low rate. But that proposal (which wouldn't be a bad idea, as part of a rational reform of the tax system) was rejected as politically impossible. So they had to create a very convoluted transaction and come up with a newly discovered tax "inequity." The Senate Finance Committee said that it "recognizes that some businesses may not be able to use completely" the increased depreciation deductions and investment credit. The committee had discovered that 49 percent of U.S. corporations reported no tax liability. The committee deduced that, since these companies were already tax free, they would not be able to use the new benefits, which would mean there would be no "investment stimulus that is an essential for economic expansion." The committee seemed unaware that not all the tax dodgers in the business world are the corporate equivalent of widows and orphans. A good many extremely profitable companies—which need no "stimulus" to make investments that will render them more profitable still—also pay no taxes.

To support their scheme, tax sales advocates frequently compare the hypothetical purchase of a $100-million plant by a taxable and by a nontaxable company. The taxable company is able immediately to take the investment credit ($10 million in tax savings) and, over five years, depreciate the purchase price ($50 million in tax savings). The plant consequently only costs the company $40 million out of pocket. The nontaxable company, on the other hand, faces a hard future. Since it can't use the credits or deductions, it is out the full $100 million. They say that is an "inequity," created by the tax system, which hinders fair competition. The solution is a tax benefit sale, which permits the loser to get some cash for his credits and deduction.

That particular "inequity" has been around as long as the tax system itself and had previously been thought to fit under the Kennedy-Carter rule that life is unfair. Why are Republicans risking the country's solvency to subsidize losers? What could be further from the supply-side doctrine so often expounded to us? The answer given is that they may only be temporary losers in need of a little help—a start-up company, for example, or one on the verge of failure which just needs some capital to straighten itself out. This is a fairly limited group, since the company must have good credit. Chrysler, for example, has so far been unable to make much use of the giveaway; the problem is that a trustee in bankruptcy would set aside the phony sale, and the tax benefits would unravel. If the primary justification for the sale is to offer assistance to the temporary loser with good credit, the tax sales subsidy is remarkably ineffective, since its most substantial benefits go to profitable companies. If you asked the average American whether he thought the "temporary loser" policy was worth increasing personal taxes by $30 billion to $60 billion, or running up the deficit by a like amount, he would say no. This is one "inequity" he would be able to live with.

In fact, Reagan Administration capitalist ideology has given way to the demands of its business consti-

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tuency. The Ford Motor Company, either a temporary or ultimate loser, made a strong pitch last spring and summer, saying it needed to make large capital investment but that if it did it would get no benefit from the investment credit because of losses. The Administration was receptive to Ford's dilemma and agreed to a provision calling for Treasury checks to be sent directly to Ford and to others who could not use the investment credit. That proposal would at least have presented the issue clearly and targeted the benefits narrowly. Then the Treasury and others objected to the direct approach, and it began to be remembered how much trouble Chrysler had gotten into when it sought some clearly labeled and narrowly targeted loan guarantees. Chrysler, like Lockheed and New York City before it, finally got what it asked for, but not before being put through an embarrassing public wringer. Better, thought the lobbyists, to bury the handouts in a businesslike-sounding tax scheme, which, since it would benefit a far broader range of corporations, would also be far easier to get through Congress. What happened, in a sense, was that a welfare program got turned into an entitlement program. Ford's better idea—the direct payment plan—began to evolve into the tax benefit sale. The evolutionary period, as Stockman said, was feeding time for the hogs. Depreciation was added to the investment credit as a bonus for sale. The beneficiaries of the plan grew to include all U.S. corporations, the profitable as well as the unprofitable. Soon there was a busy traffic in tax benefits by means of fictitious sales.

IN THE FINAL scheme, Ford gets paid by IBM rather than by the Treasury. Instead of IBM paying its taxes to Washington it pays part of them to Ford. As sale enthusiasts point out, the object of getting money to Ford is accomplished. But the amounts are not the same. The amount paid to Ford is much less than IBM would have paid in taxes. Ford gets about $200 million, the going rate for $1 billion in tax deductions. But the government, over the first five years of the lease, loses $600 million in IBM taxes—$100 million from the investment tax credit, and the rest, at about 50 cents on the dollar, from the billion-dollar deduction.

The mechanics of a typical transaction are as easy to follow as a game of Three Card Monte. 1) Ford buys $1 billion of equipment. 2) Simultaneously Ford sells the equipment to IBM for $200 million cash and a nine-year, $800-million note, providing for annual payments of $168 million—principal and interest. (These figures are illustrative since the actual agreements are not public.) 3) Simultaneously IBM leases back the equipment to Ford for nine annual rental payments of $168 million. There will be no future cash payments, since the note payments and rental payments cancel out. Ford has the option to buy the property for $1 at the end of the lease. IBM gets back its $200-million cash payment by the end of the first year (investment credit and first year depreciation).

The rest of the deal is what the experts call an interest-free loan from the government. It comes about because IBM is treated as the owner and takes the depreciation deduction, amounting to $800 million after the first year. Ford gets a $168-million rental deduction for rent it doesn't pay, but must report as income the interest on the note which it never received because IBM doesn't pay it. (The note payments are set up like your mortgage. Each payment reflects principal and interest with the interest heavier in the early years; for simplicity we will say that the payments in the first five years are all interest and in the second five years all principal.)

DURING THE first half of the lease, IBM can offset the rental with interest, allowing it to take a $200-million depreciation deduction each year. It saves $100 million each year in taxes in years two to five. With its $200-million first-year savings, it has now saved $600 million in taxes. During the second half of the lease, the situation partly turns around. By this time, IBM will have used up the depreciation deduction. Also, IBM's nonpayments are now nondeductible principal rather than interest, and do not offset the rental income not coming in. IBM is supposed to report $800 million of rental income, producing a tax liability of $400 million, while it will not receive a dollar of cash from Ford.

In essence, IBM receives a loan in the early years which it is supposed to pay back in the later years, but without interest. The lender, the government, is not compensated for letting IBM use the money that should have been paid in taxes. The value of the free use of $400 million over five years depends upon current interest rates, but it is obviously substantial. (At a 15 percent interest rate, it would be something in the neighborhood of $300 million.) The longer the lease term, the longer the deferral and the higher the price that will be paid for the benefits.

Another issue is whether many companies will be able to repay the interest-free loan. In the later years, the company receives no cash but does have a heavy tax obligation. Unless a company has prepared itself, by disciplined financial planning, for the pay-back period, it could find itself in trouble. To put off the day of reckoning, some may go out and buy some more credits and deductions, thus increasing the already huge liability. As someone with David Stockman's penchant for metaphor might say, they will be blowing up a great balloon.

Tax benefit sales transform the tax system into a theater of the absurd. Fictitious sales are called real. Over here are owners who don't own anything. Over there are renters who never pay rent. Nonpayments float back and forth between them. When Congress sets up a play world for big business, the ordinary tax payer (who is paying the bill) may well wonder why he is excluded from the fun.

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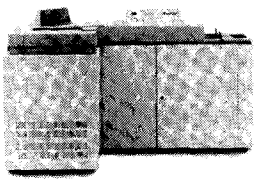

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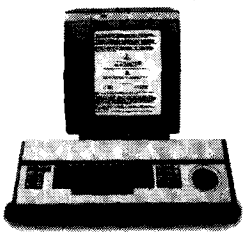

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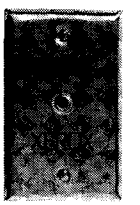

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STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

Two From The Theater

Whose Life Is It, Anyway?
(United Artists)

Tales from the Vienna Woods
(Cinema 5)

The film medium, rippling its resources, usually smiles patronizingly at any play lucky enough to break loose from the theater and get transposed to the screen. Often this turns out to be hooey: the play suffers by losing the shape in which it was conceived. Occasionally, however—much less often than film loves to assume—the change is an improvement, for one or another reason. Film has certainly helped *Whose Life Is It, Anyway?*

The original seemed to me (TNR, May 12, 1979) a TV play—"the point of the script is its subject, not the drama arising and taking over from its subject." The protagonist, despite some mordant and mordantly witty dialogue, was an instance, not a man; the subordinate characters didn't even have mordancy. The film vivifies (odd though the word is here) the doomed protagonist and makes people of the attendant puppets. If the story is still contrived to put the central man in a particularly hopeless situation, the result now is affecting, not algebraic.

Brian Clark, the Englishman who wrote the play, has adapted it for the screen with Reginald Rose, the American TV and film veteran. They have transposed it to the U.S., so that it could be made here, and they have done the predictable "breaking out" of the play's one setting, the hero's hospital room. We now see Ken Harrison, the sculptor hero, before he has the car crash that leaves him paralyzed from the neck down; we see flashbacks, after his accident, to his former state; and we go to a lot of other places—other parts of the hospital, his studio—after he is bedbound. Sometimes we even go to other parts of the hospital with Ken: his orderly, a black man who is a member of a rock group, organizes a private concert for him in the basement one night.

But the surprise is that it's not the physical expansion that helps most, it's the increased intimacy: not breaking loose from the one setting, but getting closer to it. This is not because of subjective devices that the director, John Badham, sometimes uses, like dangling the camera upside down when Ken almost falls out of bed—which is an annoying trick, not an empathic aid. It's because we feel more locked into that bed with Ken; and since Richard Dreyfuss, playing Ken, is a film actor who understands how to play sardonic counterpoint between a smiling face and the bleakness within—with the camera now bringing us closer to both—the bite is sharper. So it's a paradox: by doing some of the work that the play left to our imagination—in the theater *we* had to go to the other rooms in our minds, *we* had to make our own closeups—the film stimulates the imagination more.

Partly it's through the increased feeling of imprisonment within a dead body. Partly it's because we know Dreyfuss and know his physical energy, which may be his chief asset. He is good in the part, though he's been overpraised. Any actor, good or less good, who plays a paralytic, has a head start on praise. Clark and Rose have helped him by putting most of his despair and self-pity in bitterly funny terms, in sexy double and single entendres; so, when Dreyfuss "seriouses up" at his legal hearing for the right to be discharged (and die), it's all the more piercing. For a skillful actor like Dreyfuss, it's an easy part.

The film also improves over the play in the writing and casting of the woman doctor who attends him. Christine Lahti is perhaps a bit more made-up and blousily dressed than your average female resident, but she has, besides the ample breasts that Ken remarks on, ample humor and humanity. The moment when her head is close to his on the pillow, after he has won the right to die, when she feels the impulse, the need, to kiss him, and he turns his head away—that moment really cuts. And when she stands up, nodding in teary comprehension, she has us with her, strongly.

The ubiquitous Bob Balaban is on hand again, as Ken's lawyer; this time he stammers, but it doesn't help much. He is clearly being used a lot these days to show the way second- and third-generation Jews, particularly professionals, are being absorbed into the fabric of American life without comment; but Balaban is *over*-invisible. Kenneth McMillan, the judge in the special hearing, does his first nonslob in some time, competently. John Cassavetes is the hospital's chief doctor and is chief-doctorly enough.

With Frank Morriss, a keen editor, Badham has managed to give this circumscribed film a brisk pace by making his shooting and cutting follow people's impulses sharply. Besides, Badham has excellently choreographed the background action in the hospital corridors, of which we see a lot through the glass doors of Ken's room. I had the double sense, very welcome, that the background action was independently real yet contributing obliquely to the atmosphere of the main action.

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Chariots of Fire. A moving social drama elaborated from the true story of two British Olympic runners, 1924.

My Dinner With André. Surprisingly engrossing. A script developed from conversations between Wallace Shawn and Andre Gregory into *seeming* restaurant table-talk—of consistent interest.

Reds. John Reed and Louise Bryant, splendidly performed by Warren Beatty and Diane Keaton. Far from flawless, but stirring; more biographical than political, but on fire with its subjects' commitment.

Time Bandits. Delights children and some adults. A boy's adventures through time with six dwarfs. Monty Python dialogue sparkles.

SK

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Still, the play's central defect is uncured. Ken's situation is contrived to make any of the constructive suggestions that come his way sound useless. He's a sculptor and rejects interest in any work other than what he could do, could have done, with his hands. In the play he had received his last visit from his parents and had driven off his fiancée before the curtain rose; here he is an orphan, has no living relatives of any kind, and we see him drive his girl away. (And she is made a dancer, to emphasize his immobility.) I don't suppose a young man in that condition could bear to keep a woman he loved in what amounts to bondage; but the rest is all carpentered to make any appeals for life ring hollow. The title is large: it tries to include all of us. The play/film does not. It ought to be called: *Does An Orphaned and Paralyzed Sculptor, With No Emotional Ties and No Interest In Any Other Work, Have the Right to End His Life?* A bit long for a marquee, perhaps, but more accurate. (And, anyway, the question of whether he actually will end his life is left slightly open at the end.)

Another film from a play, by a different order of dramatist. Ödön von Horvath (1901-1938), an Austrian of Hungarian parentage, wrote 22 plays, many of which have become staples in the German-speaking theater. Some of them have been translated and performed in Britain and the U.S.: I have seen two. A few years ago I spent an evening listening to a panel of critics who are expert in German as they assured us English-speakers in the audience that we could never really understand Horvath because he is untranslatable. I have never heard an expert in any foreign language state that a good author in his language is easy to translate, so this verdict in itself did not surprise me, but it helped possibly to explain the difference between Horvath's high reputation in Germany, Austria, and German Switzerland, and his effect on me, which was slight.

In 1978 Maximilian Schell made a film of one of the Horvath plays I've seen, *Tales from the Vienna Woods*. It's now released here, and it leaves me just where I was. The film is in German—Viennese, really—and the subtitles don't help any more than the play-in-English did. Horvath remains for me a facile cynic with, on the basis of my encounters with him, small sense of dramatic progression. Once the initial situation is set, the play/film simply expands on it, without growth or deepening. I don't see how an understanding of Horvath's language could improve his structural lacks, though of course I might then get some pleasure out of his dialogue as such.

Anyone with the smallest experience of theater or film knows, the moment he reads the title *Tales from the Vienna Woods*, that what he is going to see will undercut Johann Strauss gaiety and wistfulness. Arthur Schnitzler, an incomparably more interesting Austrian author, antedated that effect in *Reigen*, 1900, which can be translated as *Hands Around* or *Round Dance* (Max Ophüls filmed it as *La Ronde* in 1950), and which is a bitter-comic cumulative comment on a circle of amours ending where it began (and, some say, symbolizing the transmission of syphilis). Horvath's play, written in 1930, tells of the daughter of a shopkeeper who is pushed toward a marriage with a fat neighboring butcher, flees to the arms of a wastrel, and after a series of degrading experiences, ends back with the butcher—also a "round dance," on a consistently lower social level than Schnitzler's but also with inferior characterizations, superficial insights, and no cumulation—only a plod to a foreseeable end.

The film is dull, but this is Horvath's fault, not Schell's. He has directed with surprising reticence and clarity, and his cinematographer, Klaus König, has shot it with just the right sardonic soft palette. Schell's cast is first-rate, especially Birgit Doll as the girl and Adrienne Gessner, who spent the Hitler years in America, as the old woman who murders her own grandchild. Many in the cast have, aptly, the pear-shaped bodies one sees so often in Vienna. No, Schell's only mistake—for export, anyway—was in choosing this play. Horvath, I venture, is one of those native geniuses who are protected by being called untranslatable.

The limits of monotony.

Philip Glass's 'Satyagraha'

By Leon Botstein

In recent years Philip Glass's music has received much acclaim. His opera collaboration with Robert Wilson, *Einstein on the Beach*, was a stunning success. The *New York Times Magazine* and the *Soho News* published laudatory articles on Glass before the opening of his new opera, *Satyagraha*, at the Brooklyn Academy of Music on November 6. Glass's popularity in the contemporary art world is attested to by the large portrait of him by Chuck Close that hangs as part of the Whitney Museum's new exhibition of highlights from the permanent collection. Before opening night tickets were sold out to the five New York performances of *Satyagraha*—to a three-and-a-half hour ordeal.

The story is presumably about the inner development of the young Mahatma Gandhi, who appears in most of the scenes, walking portentously around the stage singing short fragments of note patterns set in a straight, simple tonal harmony. The music for Gandhi, like the music of the entire opera, is primitive and repetitious, with little if any harmonic motion. As Gandhi walks around on stage belting out his lines (uniformly *forte* or louder), the large chorus, dressed mostly as Indians, sometimes as European or Birmingham, Alabama, policemen, gestures broadly and sings choral parts, *mezzo forte* or *fortissimo*, which are also monotonous repetitions of a few notes sung the same way *ad nauseum*. The harmony and melody of Glass's writing, if either term fits, are so simpleminded and predictable that the choruses in particular remind one of the worst efforts of Randall Thompson and minor choral composers of the late-19th and early-20th centuries whose affirmative, patriotic works were once standard repertoire for college glee clubs.

The entire libretto is sung in Sanskrit (the text is from the *Bhagavad-Gita*), even though the composer and libret-

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tist (Constance DeJong) are not Indian. There are several solo roles, whose musical parts, like the chorus's and Gandhi's, consist of shouting out repeated notes, cast in the squarest and most obvious rhythmic patterns. Beneath this monotonous, sustained solo and choral texture is an orchestral accompaniment that is hilarious. For three-and-a-half hours, the orchestra produces sounds that can be best described as bad instrumental finger exercises from the early-19th century, reduced in complexity but inadequately altered. Although the orchestra contains a full complement of 80 to 100 players (the Brooklyn Philharmonica, expertly led by Christopher Keene), the orchestration consists merely of overlays of instruments playing together precisely the kind of repetitious material one hears from the voices on stage. Sometimes two constantly repeated patterns are linked together, providing the slight relief of very elementary counterpoint.

The spectacle that accompanies these slow, thinly and then thickly presented do-re-mi patterns of sound repeated over and over again in each scene of the opera (each visual unit of the opera is like a miniature broken record) is, in its totality, no modest affair. The elaborate scenery includes a huge printing press which is supposed to symbolize Gandhi's journalistic efforts to marshal Indian opinion; some fabulously clad Indian gods and warriors; and a permanent pedestal center stage upon which sits a silent Tolstoy in Act I; in Act II, a silent Tagore; and in Act III, a silent Martin Luther King Jr., back to the audience, arms outstretched. Yet these passive figures who periodically turn lights on and off on a major edifice in the center of the stage can give the reader only a cursory hint of the spiritual metaphysics of the libretto of this opera. This is no minor domestic tale. *Satyagraha* depicts Gandhi's evolution from an uncertain young man to an individual of profound self-reliance. Much of this apparently spiritual odyssey is told in part by mimelike actions, executed in slow motion by chorus and actors. These gestures are not believable nor are they intended to be so. Their meaning is symbolic and elementary and entirely in step with the music. If two rudimentary phrases of music are repeated alternately in a given scene (for well over 20 or 30 minutes), then only two distinct movements by the actors on stage parallel the music, making the action appear like a card containing two single images which flips back and forth. The symbolism and the rigid, exaggerated action make the opera appear didactic. As the singers and players bombard the audience with sound and drama, one is supposed to fathom the philosophical deepening of Gandhi.

IN THE FINAL scene the chorus of Indian people marches slowly across the stage, singing over and over a simple, tonal pattern *mezzo forte*. From the other side come Birmingham policemen, walking jerkily. The outstretched figure of Martin Luther King Jr. resolves this apparent contradiction. A nonviolent confrontation follows and results in the police forcibly removing each chorister from the stage *lentissimo* while Gandhi walks around to each chorister singing the same eight-note phrase over and over again. This hour-long stage clearing operation neatly dovetails with a sophomoric mime presentation, center stage on the elevated edifice, of the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. (the Indian chorus watching) in which King slumps over his lectern. The orchestra has been vigorously and repeatedly groaning its few notes all along, but now the music fades to the close of the opera. Gandhi is left alone on stage, presumably in a state of inner recognition.

Although one might regard *Satyagraha* as an opera in the 19th- and 20th-century tradition (in view of the plot, stage, sets, orchestra, and solo voice parts), it may very well be that the primitive character of the tonal music, the symbolic action, and the Sanskrit all add up to a large-scale Indian mantra whose regular repetition is supposed to bring inner peace. But can one really transpose Indian spiritualism into what is, after all, a 19th-century Western spectacle? *Satyagraha* makes Hesse's *Siddhartha* appear like *Finnegan's Wake*. Given the grandiosity of the effort, the results are offensive, boring to a fault, primitively conventional, and monotonously regressive in musical terms.

Perhaps Glass is trying through his music to force us to appreciate the essentials of music—the single note, the single pitch, the single interval, a

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simple rhythmic pattern. Perhaps he believes that in superficial musical complexity lies neuroses; in apparent rhythmic, harmonic, and melodic indirectness, spiritual confusion. In his *reductio ad absurdum* of musical elements, Glass attempts a musical equivalent of minimal art. In light of his collaboration with artists like Sol LeWitt, perhaps *Satyagraha* is Glass's version of a musical minimalism which seeks to redeem the inherent purity of notes and rhythms or sounds that can be anticipated and easily remembered, of basic intervals and rhythms that all are truly at the heart of musical power and beauty. But if this is his intention, then here again Glass fails. Minimalism in painting and in sculpture strikes the viewer, if successful, by the simplicity of invention, by the magic of color and form in their precise and most exquisite presentation. Successful visual minimalism eschews the arbitrary, the falsely decorative, the confusion of cluttered eclecticism; but its simplicity provides the possibility of visual variation and complex perception. It avoids easy reference from the visual to the nonvisual, to the descriptive, to the literary, and to the obviously philosophical. Adequate minimalism in music would have to be justified by such criteria. But Glass's version of minimalism is not minimal. Huge orchestral textures are employed. Massive durations of time and the appearance of a Wagnerian spectacle vitiate any claim to simplicity.

ABOVE ALL, *Satyagraha* lacks the most important dimension of any music, whether popular or self-consciously serious, whether apparently simple or complex in its elements. It lacks invention. It lacks the capacity to engage the audience, either by daunting its expectations of what will come next or, with subtlety, by maintaining interest through imaginative consistency. Even the great writers of repetitive piano studies like Czerny and Hanon were inventive. Last, but not least, Glass's work does not possess even that other possible saving grace—a sense of humor. Listening to *Satyagraha* reminds one that if, for political or aesthetic reasons, a composer wishes to employ an old-fashioned compositional style or only the simplest elements of music to reach a new audience and inspire a new experience, his work must still be measured by the criteria of authenticity, inventiveness, and entertainment.

How To Read An Election

Portrait of an Election
by Elizabeth Drew
(Simon & Schuster, 459 pp., $14.95)

Blue Smoke and Mirrors: How Reagan Won and Why Carter Lost the Election of 1980
by Jack W. Germond and Jules Witcover
(Viking, 320 pp., $14.95)

The American Elections of 1980
edited by Austin Ranney
(American Enterprise Institute, 390 pp., $16.25, $8.25 paper)

In 1964, I was coordinating the local Democratic campaign in my home town of Sioux City, Iowa. Sioux City is not exactly a bastion of Democratic strength; indeed, one of the major functions of the local party was to find enough candidates to fill the ballot. A few weeks before the election, our candidate for state senator—a sometime social worker and truck driver named Vincent S. Burke—came to see me with a proposal. Vincent wanted $300 from the party's meager treasury to rent a truck. Vincent said he would place posters for the party's candidates—President Lyndon Johnson, Hubert Humphrey, Governor Harold Hughes, etc.—on the truck and drive it through town. Democrats would see the truck, Vincent assured me, and remember to vote. I told him the truck was a great idea, but that we were very short of funds. Vincent was not happy. But, somehow, he raised the money for the truck elsewhere.

On election day, Lyndon Johnson defeated Barry Goldwater in Iowa by a landslide. Harold Hughes won reelection by a larger margin than any other candidate in the history of the state. The entire Democratic ticket in Sioux City (including Vincent Burke) was swept into office. In fact, there were so many "straight ticket" Democratic votes that the blank space on the Democratic line for county attorney outpolled the Republican nominee for the job.

A few days after the election, I ran into Vincent Burke. He pulled me aside and whispered conspiratorially in my ear. "Well," he said, "did you see? Did you see?"

"Did I see what?" I asked Vincent.

"The truck," he replied. "The truck worked."

I told Vincent that the great tragedy in my life, at that point, was that Adlai Stevenson had not known about the truck.

Politics is art, not science. No one considered rerunning the 1964 election in Sioux City, minus Vincent's truck, to determine whether it was the decisive factor. In national elections, voting returns and public opinion polls usually provide enough varied evidence for any skilled analyst or propagandist to explain the results in terms consistent with his own ideological, political, or historical views; and there's never any real way to prove or disprove such explanations.

Analyses of election results generally focus on one of two areas: either on the candidates, their strategies and campaigns, or on the electorate itself. These differing perspectives were exemplified in the two major post-election books of the 1960s: the first in Theodore White's *The Making of the President, 1960*, following John Kennedy's election; and the second in Kevin Phillips's *The Emerging Republican Majority*, following Richard Nixon's 1968 victory. Both books pinpointed fundamental changes in American politics. White provided the first major insight into the decline of the parties as viable institutions and their replacement by independent candidate organizations and the media. Phillips presented one of the earliest analyses of the dissolution of the New Deal coalition.

But both books also shared a fault common to nearly all post-election

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studies: their tones reflected the fact that the authors knew the results of the elections. Had some 15,000 voters in two states (out of more than 68 million voters) switched from John Kennedy to Richard Nixon in 1960, Nixon would have been elected and White's book would have had a very different focus. Had some 118,000 voters in four states (out of some 73 million) voted for Hubert Humphrey instead of Nixon in 1968, Humphrey would have been elected and Phillips's book would have been scrapped, or at least retitled, by his publishers.

FOLLOWING the 1980 elections, the two parties joined election analysts in dividing into those who focused on candidates and those who looked to the electorate in analyzing the outcome. Liberal Democrats said, and nervously hoped, that the key to the result was the candidates, their campaigns and their strategies—that Jimmy Carter had alienated his Democratic base, mismanaged the presidency, poorly handled the politics of reelection, and given the election to Ronald Reagan. Conservative Republicans, on the other hand, wanted the focus placed on the voters; they said, and nervously hoped, that the Reagan victory reflected a fundamental shift to the right in public opinion, a basic realignment in the electorate, and the emergence, delayed by Watergate, of a conservative Republican majority.

Public opinion polls did little to resolve the matter. One Sunday morning a few weeks after the election, the *New York Times* and the *Washington Star* both reported on national post-election polls. The *Times* story found little ideological shift and viewed the election as a referendum on the Carter presidency; the *Star* saw a clearer move to the right ideologically. In fact the two stories were based on the same poll—simply written by different reporters.

An unusual number of post-election books recently have been or soon will be published that explore what really happened in 1980. Among those particularly worth reading are the following.

Elizabeth Drew's *Portrait of an Election* is unique in three respects. First, it includes essays Drew wrote during the campaign for publication in the *New Yorker*. Thus it avoids the inherent bias of retrospect apparent in most other post-election books. Second, Drew's accumulation of details provides the sharpest possible picture of the personal motivations of the candidates and the politicians involved. Third, the appendix of the book is valuable reading; it includes the strategy memos prepared by Richard Wirthlin and Patrick Caddell, the pollsters and major strategists for Presidents Reagan and Carter.

Blue Smoke and Mirrors: How Reagan Won and Why Carter Lost the Election of 1980 by Jules Witcover and Jack Germond is the year's successor to White's 1960 book. Writing after the election, the authors identify and organize campaign events and strategic decisions in a coherent, cohesive manner. They argue that the election was determined by events, particularly Iran, beyond the strategists' control.

The American Elections of 1980 is a series of essays edited by neoconservative Democrat Austin Ranney for the moderately conservative and Republican-oriented American Enterprise Institute. It includes plenty of discussion by such authors as the *Wall Street Journal*'s Al Hunt of the candidates and their handling of issues and strategy. It also probes more deeply than the other books into transitions in the electorate and the electoral process.

Two other books should also be mentioned. *The Hidden Election: Politics and Economics in the 1980 Presidential Campaign*, edited by Thomas Ferguson and Joel Rogers (Pantheon, $25.95), is a series of essays which generally indicate that the "real" choice in 1980 was minimal. Both Carter and Reagan bought basic "corporate" economics, and there was no real "left alternative" for the voters. *The Reagan Revolution* by Rowland Evans and Robert Novak (Dutton, $12.75) views the election as a mandate for basic right-wing change in the direction of American government.

MY OWN READING of the 1980 election—after reviewing the events and the polls—does not fit neatly into either the candidate/campaign-oriented explanation of the liberals or the ideological/electorate-oriented analysis of the conservatives.

I begin with the view that an American presidential election is, fundamentally, a referendum on the status quo, rather than a choice between competing ideologies or issue positions. Carter "lost" this referendum early in 1980. He was the only Democratic President in history to seek reelection during a year of increasing unemployment and was perceived to be a weak and ineffective leader. The people wanted change. The real campaign, therefore, was Reagan versus Reagan. The real issue was whether Reagan's election posed too great a risk—either to peace or to social security benefits—to take in order to get rid of an unacceptable incumbent.

The ball was in Reagan's court and there was little Carter could do about it by the time of the general election. What he could do was (1) appear presidential; (2) unite the Democratic Party's base constituencies in fear of Reagan; and (3) avoid debating Reagan and giving him the opportunity to appear "equal" in stature to the President and a "safe" choice. Carter displayed some lack of skill in all three areas—but that was what brought him the trouble in the beginning.

REAGAN'S MANAGERS, from the inception of the campaign, understood the problem. They worked as much as they could (1) to emphasize economic issues, rather than social and cultural ones, which divide the Republicans; (2) to stress Reagan's record as governor and his ability to get "good people" under him; and (3) to limit, as much as possible, Reagan's ability and opportunity to make spontaneous remarks. They generally succeeded in these goals.

Reagan was also helped in his effort by two other people in addition to his managers. First, John Anderson: he had credibility with millions of independent moderates who were too pragmatic to vote for him, but were swayed by his pronouncement that Carter and Reagan were equally bad and concluded that choosing Reagan posed no greater risk than maintaining the status quo. Second, Ronald Reagan: his age and affable personality made it tough to portray him as a dangerous radical.

The fact that these "personal" factors shaped the results should not, however, reassure liberals that more fundamental problems are not facing them. One reason for the failure of the Carter presidency—and for the despondency in liberal ranks following his defeat—was the fact that liberals had no clear-cut, identifiable agenda for the nation. The main items on their agenda were enacted (civil rights, environmental safeguards, nutritional programs, etc.) and there was little consensus on why one should support Carter, other than to stop Reagan. As recently as sev-

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eral weeks ago, a leading liberal trade unionist told a group of liberal Democrats in Washington that they were lucky *not* to be in power. "Assume Mondale was in the White House," he asked, "just what the hell would he do about these problems?"

Nor can liberals and Democrats afford to ignore the fact that conservatives are correct, to a large extent, when they talk about the dissolution of the New Deal coalition. That gradual dissolution has been taking place since the coalition elected FDR in 1932. The New Deal Majority consisted of a group of minorities—Catholics, Jews, first-generation Americans, Southerners, blacks, union members, urban dwellers—each of which considered itself outside the power structure and alienated from an American majority, which was perceived to be Northern, white, Protestant, native-born, middle-class, and Republican. The goal of the New Deal coalition was to broaden the American mainstream to include its minorities and, with the notable exception of blacks, it succeeded.

TAKE SOUTHERNERS. When FDR took office, the per capita income in the poorest state (South Carolina) was 25 percent that of the richest (Connecticut); now the figure is about 75 percent. Since FDR, one border-state politician with Confederate roots (Truman) and two Southerners (Johnson and Carter) have entered the White House. Civil rights reforms have encouraged industry and individuals to move to the South. Being Southern is no longer the basis for voting Democratic. The United States Senate tells the story: in 1954, the last time the Republican Party controlled the Senate, the 22 Southern senators were all Democrats (Northerners were Republican, 49-25); today the 22 Southern senators are evenly divided (Northerners are narrowly Republican, 42-36).

Or take Catholics. When I grew up in Iowa, the state was about 75 percent Protestant and 25 percent Catholic. Usually, the Protestants voted 2 to 1 Republican, and the Catholics 3 to 1 Democratic. When former Senator Dick Clark lost to Senator Roger Jepsen in 1978, Clark drew some 45 percent of the Protestant vote, far higher than normal for Democrats in the past. But he dropped to only 55 percent of the Catholic vote. The level of Democratic support among Catholic voters over that of support among Protestant voters had fallen from 40 percent to 10 percent. Why? Polls showed that "Catholic issues" like abortion and tuition tax credits had some limited impact, but far more important was the fact that Catholics no longer perceived themselves to be members of a minority outside the American mainstream.

To be a Catholic or a Southerner no longer makes one an outsider—and no longer automatically classifies one as a Democrat. (Such voters do remain generally Democratic in elections with no meaningful issue differences. Most people vote the party of their parents, and change is gradual.) Indeed, if FDR and Herbert Hoover were to return to America today, they would be greatly surprised to find that Alabama and Oklahoma are represented by Catholic Republicans in the U.S. Senate. Differences based on class and ethnicity are also declining. Race remains a clear indicator, since blacks remain outside the mainstream, but Democrats cannot count on blind loyalty from blacks either. Such Republican Senators as Thad Cochran (Mississippi), Mack Mattingly (Georgia), and Charles Percy (Illinois) received significant black support.

The New Deal's problem? Basically, it is that it worked. But the dissolution of the New Deal coalition does not portend its replacement by another majority coalition. There will not necessarily be a realignment along clear class, religious, regional, or other lines.

And the evidence of a realignment along ideological lines is just as slim. The fact is that Ronald Reagan's basic campaign strategy was to focus the election on valence, or nonideological issues, on which both candidates take the same position (against hostages, against inflation, against unemployment, against waste and inefficiency in government, against crime, for honesty, for competence). The contest thus becomes which candidate can best handle them. On most of the ideological issues dividing the candidates (national health insurance, abortion, gun control, ERA, SALT, etc.) the public was closer to Carter's position than to Reagan's. President Reagan's claims that the election provided him with an ideological mandate were made after the campaign, not

Gerhard L. Weinberg

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during it, when, for example, he asserted that the differences between him and Carter on ERA simply involved methodology for achieving equality.

What then can be concluded from the 1980 election?

First, that the New Deal coalition—and, to some extent, political coalitions based on regional, religious, ethnic, and, to a lesser extent, class lines—is losing its coherence and power. The issues and campaigns in American politics have been nationalized; at the same time, the media has had an opposite, individualizing effect on politics, by making the relationship between the voter and the candidate more direct than it has ever been. Groups are no longer the important intermediaries they once were.

Second, that the liberal agenda of the 1960s (voting rights, Medicare for the elderly, Medicaid for the poor, school lunches, environmental regulations, etc.) has not been replaced by any new liberal program. The aim now is simply to preserve the old gains from assault by the New Right.

Third, that the American voter is pragmatic rather than ideological. Support for basic New Deal programs and the major social advances of the 1960s has not lessened. Antipathy to government programs and spending has increased, but that antipathy is less ideological than pragmatic. It is based on concerns about the programs' impracticality, and their failure to meet the goals for which they were created, along with worry about increasing government deficits and inflation.

Fourth, the problems of the country are severe enough, the public alienated enough, and the presidency demystified enough, that people are probably more inclined to risk change—on the grounds that things can't get worse—than they have been during much of the past. (Polls shortly before the election showed that 30 percent of the voters would have supported Anderson if they had thought he had a chance to win.)

In the current political period, the danger for conservative Republicans is to attempt to read more than this conclusion from the 1980 results. The danger for liberal Democrats is to attempt to read less than this conclusion.

ALAN BARON

Alan Baron is publisher and editor of the *Baron Report* and editor of *Opinion Outlook*.

ARMS AND THE WOMAN

Mixed Company: Women in the Modern Army by Helen Rogan

(Putnam's, 333 pp., $14.95)

Living though I do in a military environment, I haven't yet had to confront the question of accepting women into the armed services. For the British forces, though four percent female, remain entirely masculine in ethos and the servicewomen themselves show no sign of wanting it otherwise. They seem happy to wear a distinctively feminine uniform, to preserve their separate women's corps, and to continue to perform noncombat tasks. It was a considerable surprise, therefore, to discover from Helen Rogan's illuminating investigation of American service life how nearly complete is the integration of the two sexes in the U.S. armed forces and how anxious some women soldiers are that the remaining barriers should be dismantled. There are American women who really do want to fight, men who support their case, and as yet no clear legal grounds for excluding them from combat. As Helen Rogan recounts, the women derive their case from the Equal Rights Amendment of 1972, which only the failure of the requisite number of states to ratify has prevented from passing into law. But since August 1981 the Army has temporarily suspended the recruitment of women, because of the strong emotions the issue arouses within the service. American male soldiers, it seems, experienced something akin to biological shock at the idea of sharing a foxhole with a woman buddy. The emotions of all American servicewomen, whether for or against the integration of combat units, have, however, been equally aroused by this reaction. Very few would be willing ever again, they told Helen Rogan, to settle for the separate and unequal status occupied by their British sisters.

YET THE BRITISH were the first to enlist women, during World War I, and they have been by no means behind other Anglo-Saxon nations, themselves pioneers in this respect, in accepting that women had the right to legal equality with the other sex. If their military women continue to accept a subordinate role, what is it which prompts their American sisters to reject it? Is it a national difference? Or is it something about the way military men treat women who come within their ambit, perhaps more pronounced on the western than the eastern side of the Atlantic, which explains the contrast? Ignorant as I was of the context in which women have served, I thought it might be useful to dig about in the literature of female military service, such as it is, in an effort to understand this new impatience.

I began with a little book, published in 1942, called *She Walks in Battledress*, by Anthony Cotterell—a journalist's account of the women's services in Britain during World War II. And as I read, I began to understand. Historians are used to decoding—indeed, that's the fashionable way for them to describe to each other what they do: translating the metaphor of a former age into that of our own. But how the devil, I asked myself as I leafed with increasing disbelief through the pages of the book, do you translate this sort of stuff?

> In a mixed anti-aircraft battery, there are 229 women and 189 men (including officers). Roughly speaking, the men do the shooting and the women do everything else. . . . The women definitely take rather a pride in being treated as men's equals, and they are extremely loyal. There is a strong element of hero-worship about their attitudes, the same kind of quality which makes women in a factory come out on strike when the foreman is fired.

Wheeauiouw!!!, as Tom Wolfe might say. Granted, this was written before

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the Sex Discrimination Act and the Employment Protection Act, but it could have been written before the sailing of the ark. It might certainly have come from a Victorian outpost of empire: substitute "white" for "black" and "native" for "women," and you're back in Bengal, circa 1857. No wonder there was a mutiny.

Among women, that is. The Indian mutineers had other things on their minds. Caste, for one, and status for another. Theirs was a mutiny *against* change. Women have been mutinying *for* change. And if, less than 40 years ago, the very center of the male preserve, the army, apparently assigned them a station somewhere between the servants' hall and the club powder room, then almost everything about the women's movement becomes understandable. Men may even have been lucky to have escaped a little Kanpur somewhere along the line. Imagine what Ulrike Meinhoff might have wrought if she had hated the opposite sex more than the capitalist class. There would have been blood on the billiard table at Boodle's.

AND YET doesn't Kanpur explain just a little the reluctance with which armies admit women to membership of the club? Recall the events: Kanpur was one of the earliest centers of mutiny in 1857. Mismanagement of the defense soon forced the British officers and sergeants, with their families, to surrender to the sepoys, on the promise of safe conduct out of the city. Most of the men were then killed by treachery, and the women and children imprisoned. At the approach of a relief force, a party of butchers entered their prison and hacked them to death. The bodies, about 200 in number, were thrown into a well. When, shortly afterward, they were disinterred, the evidence of the outrage "roused British manhood in India to a pitch of national hatred which took years to allay"—a contemporary euphemism for a wave of indiscriminate revenge against Indian men everywhere in the Kanpur district. In the nature of things, most of the victims were innocent, because the guilty had fled. But the avengers probably did not care. For the story was that the women in the well had been raped before death.

The story was false. But it was likely to be believed because, lurking in the folk memory of all soldiers, was the knowledge that rape was all too often the lot of women in the aftermath of a siege, or of any military operation, in fact. It was one of the reasons why soldiers left their wives, if and when they had them, at home when they departed on campaign. But, traditionally, private soldiers were too poor to marry. Governments would not meet the expense of maintaining a married army; families with any pretensions would not give their daughters to the military life. A few hardy or lovesick souls consistently found ways to follow their men into the field: by the end of the 18th century the British Army actually allowed two or three wives per company of a 100 men "on the strength," though they were expected to support themselves by doing the company's laundry. When widowed, which they frequently were, they commonly remarried on the spot. There is a famous story of a sergeant provoking a widow to tears by proposing to her on her return from the cemetery. When he apologized, she explained that they were tears of self-reproach, for she had accepted a corporal on the march back, "a much less good match." The story comes from Victorian India. But it harks back to an earlier age, when celibacy was the soldier's accepted lot. Hence the outrage at the Kanpur rumors. India being regarded as pacified, the army had adopted the style of garrison life where marriage, official or unofficial, was much more common. The mutineers' crime was that they had subjected the army's "pure" women to the ravages of war—and so dishonored the army itself, by a sort of sexual Pearl Harbor.

Rape among the "followers," the Indian equivalent of the baggage trains which have followed armies time out of mind, would have caused nothing like that reaction. For "impure" women were as much a part of military life as knapsacks or flogging. Where they came from we cannot now even guess, but presumably they were driven to combine prostitution with vagabondage by a degree of poverty then chronic, which we moderns cannot even imagine. Authority accepted their presence as inevitable, but savaged them when outbreaks of venereal disease attacked the investment which a healthy army represented. Medical advances in the 19th century offered an alternative to the whip and the branding iron, which was to install healthy prostitutes in official

The Right has gained much of its popular credibility by portraying itself as the champion of Family life. 1982 will see further gains by the Right unless this mass imagery is challenged. Yet real support for American families comes not from a competitive ethics of the marketplace, but from programs for child care, health care, employment, adequate housing, reproductive rights, a less stressful work environment, and the building of community networks for family support. The Right can be stopped in 1982, but only if liberals and progressives, the unions and the women's movement and civil rights groups and the religious community are understood to be the real Pro-Family force.

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brothels. As late as the 1950s, the French Foreign Legion maintained its own in Indochina, staffed by girls of the Algerian Ouled Nail tribe. One was decorated for nursing the wounded at the siege of Dien Bien Phu.

Nursing might be thought a traditional role for women in armies. But until Florence Nightingale made it one, the career was thought no more respectable in military than civilian hospitals. The Nightingale revolution, indeed, violated two taboos: those against women associating professionally with the sick and with armies. And, despite legend, Florence Nightingale's example was slow to take effect. The British nurse corps was not established until 1881, 20 years after her work in the Crimea; the American not until 1901. It was really World War I which changed attitudes on a wide scale. Patriotic enthusiasm then brought volunteers in large numbers to staff the emergency hospitals which the flood of casualties called into being, and made military nursing an accepted calling.

The casualty flood, by depleting the pool of manpower from which replacements were drawn, also initiated the moves which were eventually to make women soldiers. The British were the first to be hard pressed enough to ask for female volunteers to an "Auxiliary Army Corps." Losses in World War II prompted even the chauvinist Reich to follow their example, which was imitated, though for feminist reasons rather than those of necessity, by the United States. Waves, Wacs, Spars were living evidence of the advance women had won in the most mature democracy in the world. And the survival of the women's service into the peace further testified to it.

ELSEWHERE, in societies crucified by the war, women were drawn across the combat barrier by a stark shortage of men. They served as tank crew, machine gunners, and fighter pilots in Stalin's army; 25,000 of them were killed in action among Tito's partisans. And in wars of national resistance they were to fight also, as some Israeli and Vietnamese women did. Wherever the necessity could be avoided, however, armies held out against their participating in any but an ancillary role. We know, or if we do not Helen Rogan explains, why the United States Army was the first to lower the barriers. The abolition of the draft created a shortage of suitable male recruits which could only be made good by expanding the enlistment of women. The Equal Rights Amendment threatened changes the Army believed it could forestall only by offering women equality in everything but the combat commitment. Hence the integrated—or almost integrated—Army.

If the Army jibs at the last fence, it may not be for the reason women suspect. There are physiological reasons why men are more suitable for combat than women, however irritating women may find it to be told that. There are undoubtedly cultural reasons, about which some soldiers are frank. But whatever the male guilt about rape, prostitution, and undignified marriage—the fates, all too commonly, of women in the orbit of armies in the past—it is not really those things which inhibit soldiers from opening their closed society of combat to the opposite sex. Their resistance derives not from a sexist but an empirical position. And it is this: experience has taught soldiers that it is given to few to order others to their deaths. The capacity to do so depends on a quality of insensitivity rare in males but, by all the evidence, completely absent from females. "Men idealize women more than I thought they did," one of Helen Rogan's lady soldiers ruefully conceded. And why should they not? If the world is less a nasty place than it might very well be, that is because one whole half of the human race is unwarlike. There is something infinitely sad about a minority of that half trying to make themselves otherwise. *Vive la différence!*

JOHN KEEGAN

AN INTERESTING MINOR POET?

The Collected Poems by Sylvia Plath edited by Ted Hughes

(Harper & Row, 351 pp., $17.95, $7.95 paper)

During Sylvia Plath's short life of just over 30 years, she saw only one book of her poems published: *The Colossus* (1960). She had prepared a second one, even worked out the order of its poems, and that appeared as *Ariel* in 1965 after her death, with a number of poems added which were written in her final months. Two further volumes were published posthumously: *Crossing the Water* (1971), containing mainly earlier poems, and *Winter Trees*, in the same year, containing 18 late ones plus "Three Women," a lugubrious "poem for three voices" written for the BBC. The result of such piecemeal, though perhaps advisable, publication was to create confusion in our minds about those remarkable seven years (1956-1963) in which 224 poems were written and finished. Now, 18 years after her death by suicide in February 1963, we are at last given a thoroughly responsible presentation of the poems in chronological order, more than a third of them not previously published in book form. The old volume titles have been dropped, and poems are simply grouped under their appropriate year, dated by month and day whenever possible. The result is to make her appear an altogether larger and more satisfying poet than this reader had taken her to be.

Reading these poems through in chronological order calls into question the received idea of the clever craftswoman producing beautifully shaped objects, almost too beautifully shaped, who suddenly achieved a "breakthrough" into—in the phrase of one of that book's reviewers—the "raw genius" of the later, *Ariel* poems. You could even read it as a lesson in liberation, with the early volume coming at the end of those evil 1950s (and she went to Smith too!) and the later one heralding, along with Robert Lowell and Anne Sexton and lesser talents, a confessional freedom from the repressive, whether prosodic or personal:

> What a thrill—
> My thumb instead of an onion.
>
> —"Cut"

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Dying
Is an art, like everything else.
I do it exceptionally well.
I do it so it feels like hell.
—"Lady Lazarus"

Never mind that in both poems, as in so many of her other late ones, there was not only a bitter but a mockingly self-lacerating and playful wit, a pure revel in felicities of language ("My thumb instead of an onion"—some fun there after you get through wincing) which the desperateness of her running-out life somehow gave birth to. Too many readers, younger ones especially, approached these later poems with religious awe as if "Sylvia" (or as they would now say, "Plath") were to be treated in a manner befitting Jesus Christ; it was she who had died for our sins—so the distressed young student might feel, especially if female. Of course the backlash wasn't long in coming. One college newspaper in the early 1970s printed 24 Sylvia Plath jokes, grisly riddles the mildest of which by far went "Why did SP cross the road?" "To be struck by an oncoming vehicle."

Ted Hughes has done an exemplary job in editing these poems, writing notes to them year by year (one only wishes for more notes, since they are so interesting), and giving us a generous selection of the juvenilia pre-1956 poems. And he strikes the right note in his introduction when he remarks that

> her attitude to her verse was artisan-like: if she couldn't get a table out of the material, she was quite happy to get a chair, or even a toy. The end product for her was not so much a successful poem, as something that had temporarily exhausted her ingenuity.

The right note, for surely she was one of the most ingenious poets in this latter half of our century; and to speak of her in terms of artisan and chair-maker, rather than transmitter of pure inspiration from heaven upstairs or downstairs hell, does justice to her resourcefulness and skill as a maker.

She did not always do justice to herself in this respect; or rather, she sometimes spoke as if formal ingenuity and true feeling might not be compatible. For example, this remark made about "Point Shirley," a poem she completed in January of 1959: "Oddly powerful and moving to me in spite of rigid formal structure." "Point Shirley" was written at the time she had begun to attend (along with Anne Sexton and George Starbuck) Robert Lowell's writing seminar at Boston University, and the poem's debt to Lowell's work is evident. But consider its opening two stanzas, in which her grandmother's house is evoked:

From Water-Tower Hill to the brick
prison
The shingle booms, bickering under
The sea's collapse.
Snowcakes break and welter. This year
The gritted wave leaps
The seawall and drops onto a bier
Of quahog chips,
Leaving a salty mash of ice to whiten

In my grandmother's sand yard. She
is dead,
Whose laundry snapped and froze
here, who
Kept house against
What the sluttish, rutted sea could do.
Squall waves once danced
Ship timbers in through the cellar
window;
A thresh-tailed, lanced
Shark glittered in the geranium bed—

Such collusion of mulish elements
She wore her broom straws to the
nub.

This may have been, as her biographer Edward Butscher says it was, a deliberate attempt to capture Lowell's seaside grays; but the strict stanza, the rhymes and half-rhymes, above all the careful syntax and enjambed lines—even running over from one stanza to the next—show an attention to (in Frost's words) "the sound of sense" that is compelling and demanding of any reader's agility. The continuations and suspensions which the speaking voice must make to navigate these lines are surely central to the poem's power. If we may correct Sylvia Plath, it moves us not in spite of but partly because of its "rigid formal structure." And it is quite different from anything Lowell had done in *Lord Weary's Castle*—where the blank verse proceeds in a breathless, hurtling way—or was doing in *Life Studies*, which appeared in 1959.

During the preceding two years, Plath had grown extremely skilled at rendering sentence sounds in poems which this volume allows us to read for the first time. Here is the opening of "The Great Carbuncle" (1957):

We came over the moor-top
Through air streaming and green-lit,
Stone farms foundering in it,
Valleys of grass altering
In a light neither of dawn

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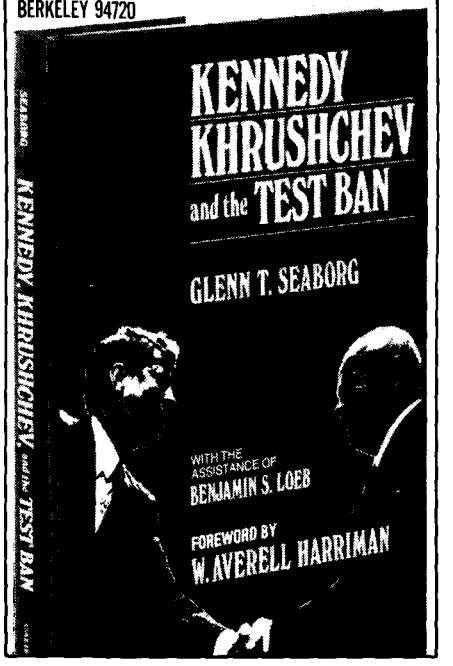
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Nor nightfall, our hands, faces
Lucent as porcelain, the earth's
Claim and weight gone out of them.

And it continues just as expertly. Imagine deciding, as evidently she did, that such a poem was not quite good enough to be included in her first book! When she spoke (in another remark quoted by Hughes) with respect to the admirable "Mushrooms" (which did make *The Colossus*) of "my absolute lack of judgment when I've written something: whether it's trash or genius," she spoke with her characteristic either/or absoluteness. But "The Great Carbuncle," or "Above the Oxbow" (here my Connecticut River sentimentality may be intruding), or "In Midas' Country," or "Child's Park Stones" (a first rate poem), or "Green Rock, Winthrop Bay" are not trash—perhaps not genius either, but something else, less sensational: assured performances, with a technical control wholly adequate to sustain the observant, grave, responsive presence that makes itself felt audibly over the carefully tracked course of stanza and whole poem. John Frederick Nims said it succintly when he suggested that young writers should be advised to "forget *Ariel* for a while; study *The Colossus*." With the new volume, this study can more intelligently take place.

If she could only "let things slip a bit," said a reviewer in admiration of her earlier poems, she will do something really special. What happened in fact was that she let them slip with a vengeance into the "stream of repulsions" (the phrase is Hugh Kenner's) that inform the poems from the last months of her life. Ted Hughes left her in October of 1962. During that month she wrote or finished 25 poems, including the ones for which she is best known. Beginning with one new to me, "The Detective," we read on through, among others, the bee poems, "The Applicant," "Daddy," "Medusa," "Lesbos," "Fever 103°," "Cut," and "Lady Lazarus." Much adjectival overkill has been employed by reviewers attempting in desperation of vocabulary to outdo the poems themselves, and George Steiner, never at a loss on such occasions, has referred to "Daddy" as the "Guernica of modern poetry." But really it is nothing of the sort, reading now like a very clever, very nasty, very hopeless horror song which holds us partly by its resourceful way of exploiting our reticence and embarrassment at what we are hearing:

I have always been scared of *you*,
With your Luftwaffe, your gobbledygoo.
And your neat mustache
And your Aryan eye, bright blue.
Panzer-man, panzer-man, O You—

Poor Otto Plath, a diabetic professor of biology at Boston University who had the misfortune to combine the diabetes with gangrene and broncho-pneumonia, so double-crossed his daughter by dying too soon, scarcely deserves such a tribute (I know, it's really a myth). And the stanza, indeed the whole poem, contains much that is repellent about Plath's poetry: the clever "gobbledygoo," a word like the one English teachers used to write on freshman themes; the relentless caricaturing of another, in tough baby-talk, all done in the interests of "art." And the panzer-man repetition. Earlier in "Daddy" we hear that "The tongue stuck in my jaw": "It stuck in a barb wire snare./ Ich, ich, ich, ich," and the poet's tongue sticks also in "Elm" ("These are the isolate slow faults/ That kill, that kill, that kill"), in "The Bee Meeting" ("They will not smell my fear, my fear, my fear"), in "The Applicant," and elsewhere. There are many more questions now, fired off by an "Ich" whose tongue really isn't stuck at all, but extraordinarily adept and daring in its leaps and spins; like the one done around the first line of "Lady Lazarus," "Dying is an art":

I do it so it feels like hell.
I do it so it feels real.
I guess you could say I've a call.

It's easy enough to do it in a cell.
It's easy enough to do it and stay put.
It's the theatrical

Comeback in broad day
To the same place, the same face, the same brute
Amused shout:

'A miracle!'
That knocks me out.

A brilliant show, but there may be a problem about how many times one wants to watch it again. That is why encountering it here, as poem #198 in a chronological sequence, is a very good thing for its continued life. She had done, could do so much with words; now she had to do this, *would* do this new turn.

But as "Lady Lazarus" goes on to say, "There is a charge . . . a very large charge/ For a word or a touch/ Or a bit of blood." The sad joke is that the reader—surrounded by all those other poets in the imaginary museum who can be summoned up in a twinkling for a performance—really doesn't have to pay

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experts...charlatans...artists...lovers
scholars...cosmologists...scoundrels

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very much to watch the show. It was Sylvia Plath who paid the charge in full, and one feels in reading the final 12 poems in this collection, those written in the month and the days of 1963 which preceded her death, form a sort of coda, or perhaps a rehearsal for a new part to be played somewhere else.

The mood is set by the bleakly wonderful "Sheep in Fog" ("My bones hold a stillness, the far/ Fields melt my heart") and holds largely through until the last poem, "Edge," in which "The woman is perfected./ Her dead/ Body wears the smile of accomplishment." But just before the finality of "Edge" comes "The Balloons," a touching surprise after the histrionic agonies of more sensational Plath-poems. For four stanzas, composed with that fluidity of motion she had grown so expert at achieving years before, these "Guileless and clear,/ Oval soul-animals" are celebrated for being themselves, for living with the mother and her children since Christmas, for keeping them company. Two last stanzas address the daughter:

> Your small
>
> Brother is making
> His balloon squeak like a cat.
> Seeming to see
> A funny pink world he might eat on
> the other side of it,
> He bites,
>
> Then sits
> Back, fat jug
> Contemplating a world clear as water.
> A red
> Shred in his little fist.

This was finished a week before she died, and unlike the balloons it remains with us, in its own words

> Delighting
> The heart like wishes or free
> Peacocks blessing
> Old ground with a feather
> Beaten in starry metals.

For years I have endorsed Irving Howe's limiting judgment of Sylvia Plath as an "interesting minor poet." But I don't think anyone who submits to this collection is likely to be comfortable with that judgment. She was rather, was indeed—as the expression goes—something else.

William H. Pritchard

William H. Pritchard, who teaches English at Amherst, is author of *Lives of the Modern Poets* (Oxford).

Strategy Of Infamy

At Dawn We Slept: The Untold Story of Pearl Harbor by Gordon W. Prange in collaboration with Donald M. Goldstein and Katherine V. Dillon

(McGraw-Hill, 873 pp., $22.95)

Hormephobia, the fear of surprise, became the contagious dread of the American military after December 7, 1941. Forty years later, haunting visions of a "bolt from the blue," unexpected blips on a radar screen, remain etched into our national consciousness. Thus, continuing interest in Pearl Harbor reflects more than morbid fascination, for the Japanese attack was a turning point in American history. Its immediate effects were devastating: 18 ships destroyed, 188 planes lost, 2,403 Americans killed and over 1,000 wounded. It proved, as Franklin Roosevelt told the public on December 9, "that we cannot measure our safety in terms of miles on any map any more." The Pearl Harbor tragedy may not have ended America's periodic flirtation with excessive moralism in foreign affairs, but by their attack the Japanese turned "isolationism," like "appeasement," into a word of perpetual discomfort.

Gordon W. Prange, the late University of Maryland historian, was clearly obsessed with the opening shots of the Pacific War. From his five-year stint as a military historian with MacArthur's occupation forces until his death in May 1980, Prange devoted his life to exploring the Pearl Harbor mystery, interviewing hundreds of soldiers and eventually befriending many of the Japanese officers involved in planning the attack. But Prange never published his 3,500 page multivolume opus. Two of his former students have now edited Prange's scholarship into a single massive book. The result is the most complete and readable account of the Pearl Harbor tragedy available.

By the very nature of his task, the historian is like the mystery fan who reads the last chapter first. As C. V. Wedgewood once noted, "History is lived forwards but it is written in retrospect. We know the end before we consider the beginning and we can never wholly recapture what it was to know the beginning only." There are two specific perils of hindsight which must be avoided in any analysis of Pearl Harbor. First, in the murky world of military intelligence, hindsight allows one to separate the important "signals" from the misleading "noise" with an ease that is utterly foreign to genuine intelligence agencies. Second, knowing what decisions were eventually made can distort our view of the agony of choice faced by statesmen deciding to go to war.

Prange avoids the first pitfall with skill. When on September 6, 1941, a *Boston Globe* reporter wrote, "A Japanese attack on Hawaii is regarded as the most unlikely thing in the world, with one chance in a million of being successful," the estimate was not so wild an exaggeration. This book provides the best analysis available in English of the numerous difficulties which Admiral Yamamoto surmounted before, first, having the dangerous plan approved by the Navy General Staff in early November 1941, and, second, achieving deadly surprise on the dawn of December 7 in Hawaii.

On the tactical side, the Japanese Navy simply had no aerial torpedoes which, if dropped from airplanes into the shallow waters of Pearl Harbor, would not harmlessly sink into the mud below. "Virtually impossible," one officer remarked when told of the scheme, "unless a technical miracle can be achieved in torpedo bombing, this type of attack would be altogether impractical." But, through a long process of creating a new finned torpedo and practicing low altitude bombing maneuvers, Yamamoto's navy found its "technical miracle."

The tactical problems, however, were simple compared to the larger operational difficulties: the Navy General Staff objected to "Operation Hawaii" because genuine surprise would be impossible to ensure, refueling techniques for the necessary ships were not perfected, the clear weather required for the air attack was a huge imponderable, and, in any case, Yamamoto's air-

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craft carriers were needed for the projected campaign against the British, Dutch, and possibly the Americans in Southeast Asia. But Yamamoto argued that all war consists of risk and, although personally opposed to a decision to go to war, he believed that Japan would be "favored by God's blessing" only if officers were "firmly determined to devote themselves to their task even at the sacrifice of their lives." Finally, when Yamamoto, the commander of the combined fleet, and his entire staff threatened to resign immediately, Admiral Nagano, the navy Chief of Staff, reluctantly gave his approval to the Pearl Harbor plan.

Prange's focus on the Japanese Navy is enlightening, but does produce some flaws in his analysis. War planning is sometimes confused with decision-making, and Prange consistently underestimates the importance of the Liaison Conference, the joint meetings of Cabinet officials and military commanders, in which the final decision to go to war with the United States was made. This oversight is crucial for it allows Prange to ignore the significance of two enduring problems in military affairs. First, the history of the Pearl Harbor plan illuminates the persistent tension between the short-range operational thinking of military officers, whose business is to win wars, and the longer-range strategic thinking of governments, whose job is to decide whether the war should be waged. This tension is especially pronounced, in this case, with respect to Japanese perceptions of American morale and willingness to accept a long, bitter conflict in the Pacific.

Admiral Yamamoto incorrectly believed that, after the Pearl Harbor attack, "the morale of the U.S. Navy and her people" would "sink to the extent that it could not be recovered," and that the American government would sue for a compromise peace. Others, in the Cabinet and even the military, believed the opposite: if Japan confined her attack to the southern regions, even the Philippines, the Americans might remain open to possible negotiations, but the U.S. would "go insanely mad" (as one officer put it) at a surprise attack, thereby eliminating Japan's only long-range hope. Even today scholars are not certain which members of the Liaison Conference knew about the Pearl Harbor attack; "Operation Hawaii" was never even mentioned during the meetings. What is clear in the documents is that the civilian and military leaders in Tokyo together never fully discussed the political implications of the Pearl Harbor attack. A strategic tension existed which was never acknowledged, much less resolved, in Tokyo.

Second, Prange's analysis overlooks an important irony in the Pearl Harbor story: that the United States had cracked the Japanese diplomatic code and was reading all the Foreign Ministry's telegrams was of great help to us, but may have also misled our leaders. In the fog of diplomacy, even accurate intelligence about what the enemy *says* may not reflect what the enemy *thinks* or is capable of negotiating. In the summer of 1941, the United States froze Japanese assets and cut off Tokyo's oil supply in response to the Japanese move into southern Indochina. Often throughout the Pacific crisis that summer, Washington's diplomatic position stiffened partly because we "heard" the belligerent messages Tokyo sent to her embassies. A more flexible American negotiating position may not have averted the war, but the fact that we will never know what would have happened if, for example, President Roosevelt had met with Premier Konoye, as the Japanese proposed, is an ambiguous testimony to the efficacy of our Magic codebreakers.

Prange's analysis does, however, underline how eminently sensible Washington was to believe that, if Japan chose war, the initial attack would not take place at Pearl Harbor. It made more "sense" for the Japanese to push south, attacking Thailand, the British and Dutch possessions, and, perhaps, the Philippines, than to attack Hawaii. The degree to which American officials were fixated on this idea is best seen by Secretary Knox's reaction to the urgent dispatch saying Oahu was under attack. "My God," he blurted out, "this can't be true, this must mean the Philippines." To which Admiral Stark simply replied, "No sir; this is Pearl."

Prange did not seek scapegoats for the complex and tragic failure of American policy in December 1941. There were many "contributions" to the disaster and no single source of "responsibility." He has a special vehemence for the revisionist's thesis that Roosevelt had advance warning of the Pearl Harbor attack and sacrificed the fleet and its men to get a reluctant America involved in World War II. After Pearl Harbor such theories were abundant and reached their scurrilous height when a Chicago paper reported not only that Roosevelt knew about the attack, but that the pilots flying the deadly Zeros were British and American with a few Japanese aboard solely to take photographs.

THE POPULARITY of the revisionist thesis among U.S. isolationists is readily understood. The surprise attack was difficult to explain within the world view of those who believed that German and Japanese expansion posed no threat to American security. For isolationists, an intellectual consistency, undisturbed by the events of December 1941, demanded that the blame be placed on their *bête noire*, Roosevelt.

The continued popularity of the "FDR knew" myth is more difficult to explain.

THE LEAST OF THEM

Make me the absurd
homely clerk or pet.
Name me an insipid word
you as soon forget.

When I'm in the booth
make my mind to be
so insensate and uncouth
film won't picture me.

When I think to write
blot me out each text
with an aimless, recondite
nothing that comes next.

Do not reignite
any old desire
(faces that address the light,
foreheads tipped with fire).

I would hold the hem
or retrieve the glove.
I would be the least of them
I have stood above.

MARY KINZIE

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In part, one can point to some famous, but unfortunately misleading evidence: Roosevelt's reported comment, "This means war" upon receiving the decoded, but incomplete, Japanese message on the night of December 6, meant he believed war was soon to break out somewhere in the Pacific, not that he knew Pearl Harbor would be the target. Secretary Stimson's later admission that "it was desirable to make sure that the Japanese be the ones to do this [fire the first shot] so that there should remain no doubt in anyone's mind as to who were the aggressors," correctly suggests only that the United States did not want to attack Japanese forces first, not that anyone in Washington desired the Pearl Harbor tragedy.

PART OF THE myth's popularity is due to the same causes as most conspiracy theories: a preference for the simple answer over the exceedingly complex reality. It is always easier for many people to see evil intentions than to believe in massive incompetence or a series of complicated mistakes. Perhaps some will think the psychologist's answer is relevant. People more readily believe in other's evil intentions, being able to see their own; but being oblivious to their own stupidity, they can't see it in others.

I would emphasize a more political form of a psychological argument. In Prange's concluding chapter, "The Verdict of History," he lays some of the blame for the surprise on Admiral Husband E. Kimmel and Lt. General Walter D. Short, the Navy and Army commanders on Oahu. Kimmel's most grievous fault was his failure to conduct long-range air reconnaissance around Oahu. Although the Japanese forces were prepared, if discovered, to fight their way through to Pearl Harbor, American losses would have been reduced with even a short period of warning. A fixation on possible sabotage by local Japanese residents was General Short's tragic flaw: believing that sabotage, not direct attack, was the most probable threat to Hawaii, Short had anti-aircraft ammunition stored away from the guns, for "safe keeping." The result was silence from the anti-aircraft batteries when the Japanese attacked.

Kimmel, who was slightly grazed by a spent bullet during the attack, devoted much of the rest of his life to justifying himself in front of the American public, and in a touching portrait Prange explains why this was so:

> [T]he human psyche has its own self-sealing properties. For Kimmel to acknowledge even to himself that he shared to the slightest measure in the guilt of Pearl Harbor would be to leave himself open to a hell of remorse and memory. He experienced his moment of truth on December 7, 1941, when he held a spent bullet in his fingers and murmured, 'It would have been merciful had it killed me.' Then the fire doors slammed shut. The fault must lie elsewhere.

For the American people, a brief moment of truth occurred in the shock of December 7, 1941. But the enormous success we had in waging the war against the Axis helped us forget our portion of responsibility for causing it. Harry Truman put it best: "The country as a whole is basically responsible in that the people were unwilling to take adequate measures [for] defense until it was too late to repair the consequences of their failure to do so." This verdict is difficult to accept and its lessons should be applied with caution; it is, nonetheless, the essential truth.

SCOTT D. SAGAN

Scott D. Sagan is writing a book on deterrence and strategy in the pre-nuclear era.

HOSTAGES TO CHAOS

Mission to Iran
by William H. Sullivan
(Norton, 320 pp., $14.95)

Inside and Out: Hostage to Iran, Hostage to Myself
by Richard Queen with Patricia Hass
(G. P. Putnam, 256 pp., $13.95)

Inside the Iranian Revolution
by John D. Stempel
(Indiana University Press, 352 pp., $17.50)

America Held Hostage: The Secret Negotiations
by Pierre Salinger
(Doubleday, 300 pp., $16.95)

Roots of Revolution: An Interpretative History of Iran
by Nikkie R. Keddie, with a section by Yann Richard
(Yale University Press, 316 pp., $25, $5.95 paper)

When the history of modern Iran is written, the decade 1970-1980 will doubtless be recorded as the American neocolonial period. The United States had been involved with the Shah throughout his reign, especially through the CIA's role in bringing him back to the throne in 1953; but it was the decision of the Nixon Administration to make the Shah the principal protector of American strategic interests in the Persian Gulf that gave the United States an unprecedented importance in Iran's affairs. In *Inside the Iranian Revolution*, John D. Stempel provides some instructive statistics. In 1969 the Shah ordered $235.8 million in military supplies from the U.S. By 1977 the total was $5,713 billion. In 1972, there were 9,087 Americans living in Iran. There were 53,941 in 1978, the year Jimmy Carter, in a Tehran banquet toast to the Shah, delivered a panegyric to his stature and stability. Barely a year later, the Shah,

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sick and defeated, was in exile. The decade ended on a dismal note with the seizure of the U.S. Embassy on November 4, 1979.

For the United States, the Iranian episode was one more blow to the sense of optimism that had prevailed since World War II about what well-intentioned American support could do for regimes that serve our interest. Along with our failure in Vietnam and now the setback of Anwar Sadat's death and the unpredictable prospects and perils of our relations with Egypt and Saudi Arabia, our experience in Iran has encouraged the pessimistic, and probably exaggerated, feeling that too much American involvement leads to collapse. And watching our allies totter, worried Americans have invoked a contrast with supposed Soviet successes—a specious comparison. Soviet neocolonialist failures, it is well to remember, include Mao's China, Sukarno's Indonesia, Nkrumah's Ghana, and Nasser's Egypt. Massive expenditures of money, materiel, personnel, and influence were unable to turn these countries to long-term Soviet advantage, forcing the Kremlin to pursue new partners, just as we have.

The appropriate question for today, therefore, is not why do we fail in a situation like Iran whereas the Soviets succeed. It is: what can we learn from that experience? Last month's anniversary of the hostage seizure was the occasion for the publication of a stack of books about Iran by Americans—an academic, a journalist, and three diplomats. Let me mention two briefly and then deal a bit more fully with the others.

Roots of Revolution by Professor Nikki R. Keddie, a UCLA specialist on Iran and the Middle East, is an "interpretive history" of modern Iran written for what the Yale University Press calls its "fastback" series "designed to bring subjects of keen current interest to readers as quickly as possible." Professor Keddie's study, in conjunction with a section by Yann Richard, offers a broad yet detailed overview of Iranian history which emphasizes the 19th and 20th centuries. The essence of the book's message is conveyed in its final words:

> Iranians see foreign powers, which recently meant the Americans, as using them for their own purposes, always for Iran's strategic role, with the hope of scoring gains and stopping gains by others, chiefly the Russians. . . . However wrong and self-defeating have been many of the policies used in Iran since [the] Revolution, one may understand the Iranian's widespread desire to demonstrate their release from foreign control and foreign ways. . . .

This book is the sort of concise and lucid work that might have been useful in forestalling our Iranian blunder. Pity now is too late.

PIERRE SALINGER has expanded a brilliant three-hour report for ABC News, broadcast the week the hostages were released, into *America Held Hostage: The Secret Negotiations*. Principally through his contact with French lawyers who were used by the Iranians in one stage of the hostage release bargaining, Salinger has provided a vivid account of the frustrating process which eventually led to freedom for the Americans (although not by the channel Salinger knows most about). Salinger has more information on the cloak-and-dagger haggling than anyone else. He knows about Hamilton Jordan's pseudonymous trans-Atlantic trips to meet with Iranian envoys; he has access to the surprisingly detailed plans for an early hostage turnover, worked out by Jordan but never implemented. He knows all about the nearly successful Iranian effort to have the Shah extradicted to Iran while he was in Panama. His book is an exciting narrative, but because the television version was so good, the effect is like reading the novelization of a movie you've already seen.

Richard Queen's *Inside and Out* is the first of what will be a number of accounts by former hostages. Queen was freed about six months before the other hostages because he fell ill with multiple sclerosis, at least in part, it is thought, because of the treatment he received from his captors. On one level, Queen's book is a simple retelling of the ordeal of an unexceptional young American trapped in a maelstrom. The book, which in the best U.S. tradition of free enterprise, is intended to capitalize on an experience that enthralled the nation, comes complete with the endorsement of Dan Rather, who calls Queen "one hell of a man." Unfortunately Queen's book barely satisfies our curiosity about the Iranian militants. He does tell us that in the early weeks they had

> votes nearly every other day on *jang*, which means war, and *azadee*, which means freedom. They would argue before they voted. I heard one young guy about nineteen having a heated discussion with an older one. . . . the older one didn't think that they should free the Americans even if that meant war. The young one actually cried and said, 'you are going to have thousands and thousands of people killed for fifty people.' When they argued or voted, war won each time.

What does come through clearly in Queen's book is the chasm that divided the Iranians from the Americans. Language, culture, expectations, instincts divided the imprisoned Yankees, most of whom could barely ask to go to the bathroom in Farsi, from radicals whose sole knowledge of the United States was that we had backed the reviled Shah. One obvious truth that emerges from even Queen's limited account, one that is underscored in the other books, is that this country would be far better served by sending envoys abroad trained to deal with the societies they are serving. Queen's book is ultimately a shallow tale. But with so many hostage accounts in the offing, we are bound to get one that makes the grade.

AMBASSADOR William Sullivan acknowledges in his *Mission to Iran* that despite his ignorance of the country and the Islamic culture, he was picked by the Carter Administration to go to Iran because of his experience in dealing with "hard-nosed" leaders, most recently President Ferdinand Marcos of the Philippines. The Shah, it seems, owned such a fierce reputation that only a skilled lion-tamer like Sullivan could handle him. The irony is that American diplomatic records dating as far back as before the Shah's first ouster in 1953 portrayed him as indecisive in moments of crisis, even weak-willed. His imperious manner and oil-stimulated wealth gave him an image of

"WHEN SOVIET misbehavior simply gets too outrageous even for liberals to ignore, we are warned against 'overreacting'—which covers most forms of reacting. Note, too, the proliferation of liberal defense 'experts' who hibernated through the Soviet military buildup of the Seventies, but who rush forth at the first sign of a belated American response to caution us against starting 'a new arms race'."

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resolve that confused the Americans who had to deal with him. Sullivan writes after his first meeting with the Shah that he had been conditioned to "recognize a tough customer when I met one. The man to whom I had presented my credentials certainly did not fit into that category."

Sullivan's is in many respects the most interesting of the new Iran books. As a career diplomat with many years of Washington experience (he was called Kissinger's Kissinger during the Vietnam negotiations), he has a finely honed sense for the moments when decision-making goes awry. His nearly two years in Iran spanned the unraveling of the Shah's rule and his book conveys the unraveling of policy in Washington at the same time. Inevitably, Sullivan's judgments have to be viewed as affected by his own role. He emerges from this account as cool and responsible, while the Shah is depicted as increasingly pathetic and Washington appears as a textbook of ineptitude.

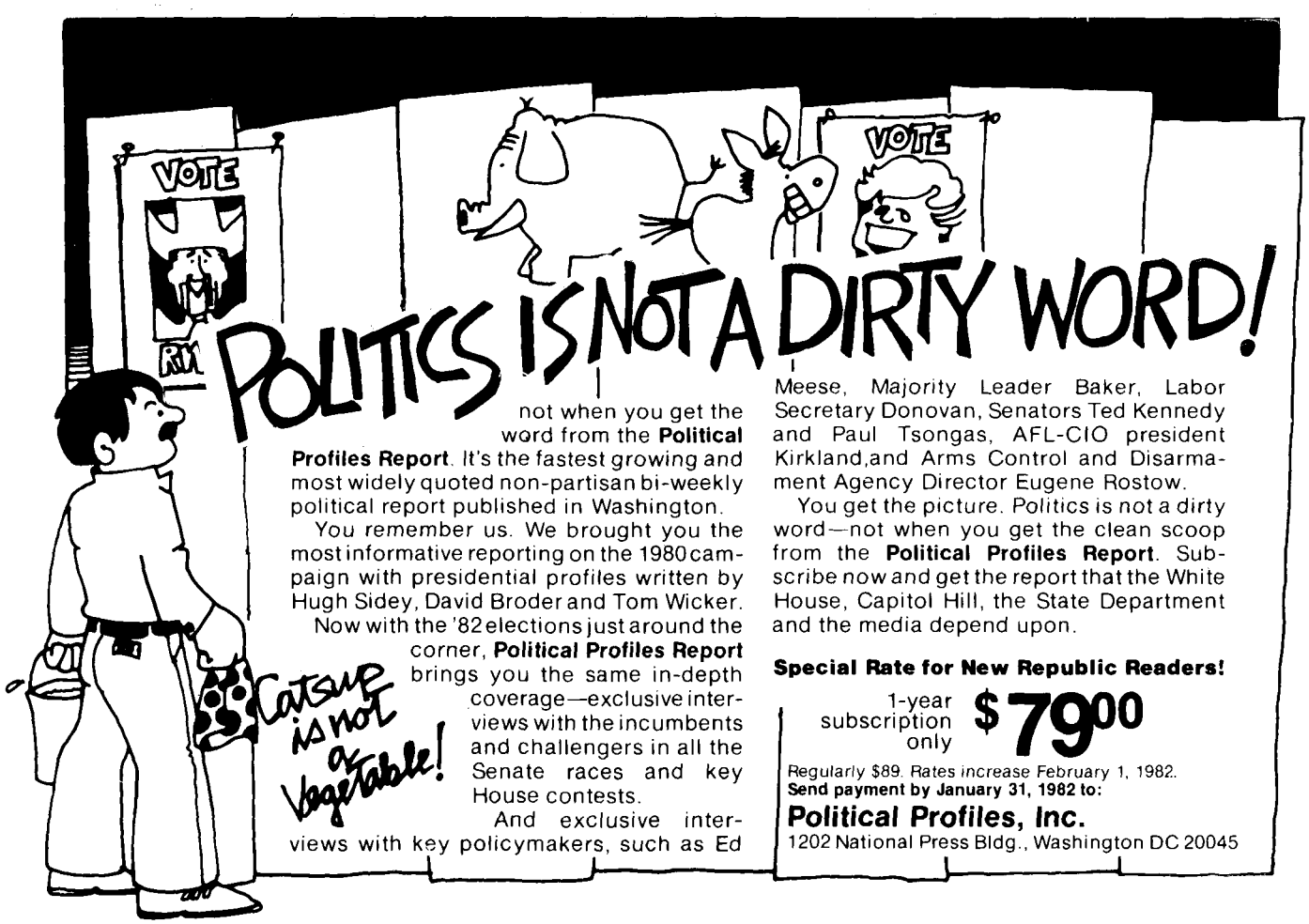
One of the most graphic illustrations of how bad things got between Washington and Tehran came on February 11, 1979. Twenty-six members of the U.S. military advisory group were pinned down under 105 mm Howitzer fire as the revolutionary turmoil reached its peak. Sullivan was understandably alarmed. A call came through from Washington, with Under Secretary of State David Newsom on the line asking for an assessment of the situation. "I gave it to him in a few short phrases," Sullivan writes, "emphasizing my current preoccupation with trying to get my 26 military personnel out of the bunker." Fifteen minutes later the phone rang again, with Newsom and Deputy Secretary Warren Christopher on the line. They said National Security Adviser Brzezinski

> wanted my views on the possibility of a *coup d'état* by the Iranian armed forces. . . . the total absurdity of such an inquiry in the circumstances . . . provoked me to a scurrilous suggestion for Brzezinski that seemed to shock mild-mannered Under Secretary Newsom. When he told me it was not a particularly helpful comment, I asked whether he wished me to translate it into Polish and hung up.

There is unlikely to be a blunter version from an American principal—an official with direct, intimate, firsthand knowledge of what happened—on how badly Iran was handled at the end by the United States.

Finally, John D. Stempel's *Inside the Iranian Revolution* is an informed and thoughtful survey that focuses primarily on the American decade in Iran as the catalyst in an upheaval whose roots go much further back than the American period. Stempel was a political officer in the U.S. Embassy from 1975 until July 1979. His book is a diplomat's after-action report—neither scholarship nor journalism but a little bit of both.

Stempel's view, reflected in the other books as well, is that the Shah's headlong push for modernization combined with flaws of his political, as well as personal, character to bring him down. The American problem was an inability or unwillingness to perceive these realities until it was too late. "[Special Adviser] George Ball's recommendation that the Shah move to a broader based government was given to the president in early December [1978], an analysis



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months behind events," Stempel writes. Brzezinski's efforts to rally the military, Stempel continues, came when "the disintegration of the Iranian armed forces was already terminal." A plethora of American concerns over the years—Vietnam, political changes at home, the Arab-Israeli conflict, Jimmy Carter's advocacy of human rights—all served to divert attention from the fundamentalist volcano building in Iran. An official commitment to uphold "our guy" served to limit assessments of what other guys might be doing.

The library of books on Iran leaves no doubt that for all the immense intelligence capacities of the U.S., for all our military and strategic clout, we still know too little about how best to use our power in critical places like Iran. Today the Reagan Administration believes a clear military edge over the Soviets will eliminate such problems. But it wasn't the Soviets who did us in in Iran. Alas, it was ourselves.

PETER OSNOS

Peter Osnos is the national editor of the *Washington Post*.

BRIEF REVIEW

The Last Ambassador by Bernard Kalb and Marvin Kalb

(Little, Brown, 276 pp., $13.50)

Diplomatic Immunity by Tad Szulc

(Simon & Schuster, 405 pp., $14.95)

These two books have a lot in common. Both are hardcover versions of the TV docudrama—fictionalized renditions of real, recent events: the fall of Saigon in 1975 and the overthrow of the Somoza dictatorship in Nicaragua in 1979. Both books focus on the U.S. ambassador as the central character. Both are written by journalists with long experience in foreign policy and convey a sure sense of the way embassies run and often run afoul of the bureaucrats and politicians who make policy back in Washington. Both books are exciting and suspenseful in spite of the fact that we know (or think we know) how the story is going to end, and both actually portray their characters as more than mere caricatures. Both are worth giving to your favorite thriller-hound for Christmas, or even reading yourself.

But the books also are different. The Kalbs take only a stab or two at explaining the reasons for America's tragic misadventure in Vietnam. The message of the novel, all too little developed, is that Americans never understood Vietnam, viewing it only as an ideological testing ground.

The Kalbs' book basically is an entertainment, and a good one, involving spies, beautiful women, intrigue, and action. It also has the virtue of being fair to the oft-maligned Ambassador Martin, a rigid, arrogant ideologue who did, however, effectuate the dangerous final retreat from Vietnam with courage.

Tad Szulc's book manages to be both entertaining and serious. It imagines what might have happened if Sally Shelton, a Deputy Assistant Secretary of State under President Carter and later Ambassador to Barbados, had been assigned to Nicaragua instead. Shelton, beautiful, bright, tough, and liberal, is in disguise here as Julia Savage. Nicaragua is in disguise as Malagua. Anastasio Somoza, the corrupt tyrant, is Juan Ferrer. In this book, like the Kalbs', there is violence, sex (the U.S. ambassador is improbably involved with a Jesuit revolutionary who becomes foreign minister), and loads of intrigue.

Unlike the Kalb book, however, Szulc's is strong on political content. It constitutes virtually a casebook on how the U.S. can—did—go wrong in Central America. There *was* a moderate opposition to Somoza, but we acted tardily in supporting it, making the civil war far bloodier than it needed to be and, in the end, promoting the far-left takeover that we sought to avoid. All this Szulc dramatizes compellingly, but I think he overdramatizes the evil influence of the Central Intelligence Agency, which he portrays as persistently conspiring against official U.S. policy, even to the extent of contracting assassinations. Also, Szulc lets his imagination run free (even a little wild) in describing Somoza-Ferrer's brutality, but eases off on the far left. Communism is represented merely as a fascist's whipping boy, not the menace it really is.

MORTON KONDRACKE

TRB, *from page 4*

the White House this year. Hopkins is harboring a mortal disease but he, too, lets nothing halt the work at hand. Eleanor is another one, but she is a bit of a Puritan, not devious like her husband. She goes down into coal mines.

In his moving new book, *FDR: A Centenary Remembrance*, Joseph Alsop contrasts FDR and Churchill. The latter, with his enormous reading, is a pessimist and the leader of an empire on its downward slope; FDR is narrower and more superficial, but with an unquenchable confidence that resonates from the radio and affects the nation. When every bank was closed and Roosevelt reopened them, why didn't people grab their money and run? For a day the balance trembled, but no, things were safe now; FDR had persuaded them. (Forty years later, when Wall Street was offered lavish tax cuts and concessions, it did not respond. In 1981 the stock and bond markets didn't have faith!) The Roosevelt-Churchill friendship was the cornerstone of the Western alliance throughout the war, and it was never interrupted. FDR was gay, charming, buoyant, humorous, and deft. He was a manipulator of men, with a thin streak of cruelty in him that made him sometimes strike out sharply and harshly. Churchill, a child of history, sometimes thought FDR naive. He was a scion of the great Marlborough line and half-American.

I was in the White House last week at one of the big Christmas celebrations (graciously presided over by Ronald and Nancy Reagan) and surveyed the old presidential portraits on the walls. There were the early ones whose name you can't remember, and there was good old Calvin Coolidge (his lovely wife Grace in another painting with the white collie), and there was Richard Nixon, too, tucked away in a corner somewhere, and all the rest. (The big jolt I got was finding myself face to face with Lyndon Johnson; his picture is almost photographic, with that little cynical smirk on his mouth. He looked right at me in the crowd, an old acquaintance, not around me or past me, but right in the eye, and we shared a secret grin together.)

I asked myself a question after 40 years, and all those Presidents. What a mixed bag: some great, some near-great, some failures. When the next crisis comes, which will it be?

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

'Dead Souls'

THE SOULS OF THE DEAD, as Nikolai Gogol's short story showed us, can be very valuable. Such souls are even fought over by the living—as the soul of John Reed has been fought over, from virtually the day he died, by Communists and those who used to be called "premature" anti-Communists. The release of *Reds*, Warren Beatty's stunning film on Reed, has reactivated this struggle for possession: did John Reed become disillusioned with the Bolshevik Revolution? Inevitably, partisans will take what they want from the movie, even what isn't there. One sentimental old leftist told me he was so moved by the strains of the "Internationale" and the sight of marching masses outside the Winter Palace that he felt the confident faith of the 1930s stir in his bones again. *Barron's*, a financial weekly put out by Dow Jones, sourly lamented that "Paramount Pictures has made a Communist propaganda epic." Nonsense. Maybe the editors of *Barron's* would have preferred a downbeat rendition of the "Internationale." There has indeed been a chorus of acclaim, but not because the film even remotely resembles Communist propaganda. First of all, there are Emma Goldman's prescient jeremiads about Soviet tyranny. The Cassandran radical anarchist (to mix a metaphor) was lamely portrayed, as Stanley Kauffmann said in his review (TNR, December 16), by Maureen Stapleton. (I told Beatty that he'd have done better to cast the perfervid Bella Abzug as Goldman. But Bella would have had more trouble with Emma's lines even than Stapleton did, though for other reasons.) In the first segment, Beatty conveys Reed's idealism as a potion of passion, simplification, and innocence. There are stark revolutionary situations in which he seems no more complicated than the football cheerleader he was at Harvard. But more importantly, the second half of the film chronicles Reed's deepening differences with the Bolshevik leadership, differences on strategy, in matters of honor, about fundamental aims. *Reds* is faithful to grim history as we know it. The only truth to which Beatty is not faithful is Reed's faithlessness to Louise. Inexplicably, he leaves out Reed's Russian girlfriend. Nonetheless, Beatty has some wonderful moments both in and out of bed; but his best is when Reed accuses Zinoviev, Radek, and their comrades in Leninism of liquidating the revolution. This is pretty much what they did, although the revolution also liquidated them, plus some 20-odd million innocents besides. But by then Reed had been dead long since. Disillusion being the wages of hope for survivors, his closest American collaborator, Max Eastman, journeyed far rightward. And Reed's narrative of the October Revolution, *Ten Days That Shook the World*, led a bizarre career of its own. For decades it was alternately banned or published in various doctored versions, every shift in the Kremlin leadership requiring its own historian.

SWEDEN IS NEUTRAL in world affairs. Neutrality has helped make it, like Switzerland, prosperous. During World War II, for example, the Swedes sold items to the Nazis that were critical to the Axis war effort; they specialized in ball bearings. Their preachy rhetoric is still a cover for sleazy behavior. Sweden violated international sanctions against Rhodesia. Stockholm was a center for the pirating of American computer technology to the Soviet Union. The Swedes also provided nuclear, electronic, and missile know-how to Qaddafi's Libya. We now know precisely how much the Kremlin respects Sweden's neutrality. So Sweden and the friends of what is coyly termed "the middle way" for Europe are trying to make light of Soviet violations (with nuclear weapons, no less) of Swedish sovereign rights. That's what the makers of Kalback beer, Sweden's leading brewers, have done, too. A full-page ad appeared in the *New York Times* a few weeks ago, asserting, "Recently a Russian submarine ran aground in Sweden. Probably not in search of Swedish military secrets but of the Swedish brewing secret behind Kalback lager." A joke, you might say. Well, yes, it is a joke. But it is hardly the gallows humor which would have been appropriate. Sweden's pretensions have now been wholly punctured: Stockholm did not even dare ask for the whereabouts or, for that matter, the bones of, Raoul Wallenberg. The Swedes ask nothing now, except that they still be allowed to prosper. So they have turned their humiliation into an occasion for peddling their wares and denying that they were humiliated at all.

MY PARANOIA about the acceptance of anti-Semitism in American business circles is easily fed. So you can imagine what I felt when, during the takeover battle for Conoco waged by Seagram, Mobil, and Du Pont, a *Wall Street Journal* news story, stirring absolutely no concerns, as far as I could tell, reported that the government of Dubai had weighed in with a letter against Seagram, saying it was a company to which it would rather not sell its oil. The letter implied that if a Seagram-owned Conoco couldn't buy Dubai's oil, Conoco shareholders would do better to tender their shares to the other corporate suitors. Optimists said the letter was sent because Seagram made liquor, which pious Moslems abhor. I thought this implausible and, being a pessimist, concluded the real reason was that Seagram is a predominantly Jewish-owned company. But I subsequently learned that Seagram, through Texas Pacific (a subsidiary it has since sold), had had an oil concession in Dubai, and that the Canadian-based distiller had negotiated with the emirate for the sale of its Mies van der Rohe-designed corporate headquarters at 375 Park Avenue in New York. This meant Dubai wasn't so exercised by the Arab-Israeli conflict that it wouldn't do business as usual. So what was this little Conoco communication all about? A grippingly detailed article by Steven Brill in November's *American Lawyer* explains it all: Joseph Flom is a hot lawyer with the hot firm Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher and Flom in the twin hot fields of winning and fighting off hostile mergers. He's so hot that he had to disqualify himself early this fall from defending his client Grumman Aerospace Corporation against a takeover attempt by LTV, because LTV was also his client by retainer. He'd already been busy during the summer masterminding Conoco's strategy to elude the Seagram embrace. And it turns out that it was he who conceived of and arranged for the Dubai intervention. Clever lawyer, all right—and Jewish, too. So here's a clever Jewish lawyer contriving an anti-Jewish gambit where none existed. His mother must be proud.

M.P.

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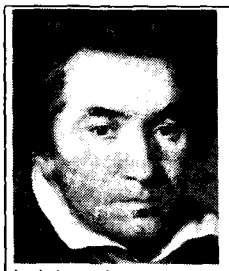

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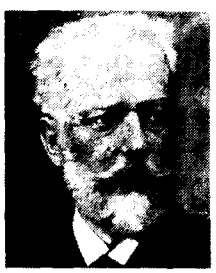

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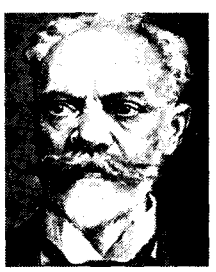

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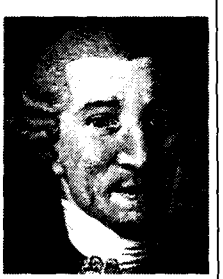

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